

The Healthy Computer

A Seven Point Tune Up

Following these seven steps could save you an average of \$240 a year.

1. Proper Operating System updates
 - a. Check once a month
 - b. Must be connected to the Internet
 - c. Start > Windows Update or Start > All Programs > Windows Update
 - d. Select the Custom Button
 - e. Repeat until High Priority, Software (optional), and Hardware (optional) are all 0's
 - f. Automatic Updates only applies High Priority updates

2. Proper Antivirus installed, updated and scanning
 - a. Check once a week
 - b. Virus definitions should never be more than 7 days old
 - c. Last Scan should never be more than 30 days old
 - d. Set weekly automatic scan
 - e. Viruses more devastating, but less frequent than Spyware
 - f. Norton Anti Virus, McAfee used 95% on all computers
 - g. Free AVG from Germany an option

3. Proper Anti-Spyware installed, updated, and scanning
 - a. Check once a week
 - b. Spyware definitions should be updated weekly
 - c. Last scan should never be more than 1 week old
 - d. Set weekly automatic scan
 - e. No one program covers all Spyware
 - f. Of 9 programs tested , Spy Sweeper does best, easy to use
 - g. Free Spybot from Germany an option

4. Proper Peripherals installed and working
 - a. In Windows XP, install peripheral software first, then attach device when asked to do so
 - b. Replace parallel port devices with USB devices
 - c. USB hubs should be powered

5. Proper Internet connection
 - a. Costs
 - i. \$10/mo – Unlimited Dial up – Net Zero, People PC, Juno (must install their software)
 - ii. \$22/mo – Unlimited Dial up – EarthLink, no extra software needed
 - iii. \$24/mo – Unlimited Dial up – AOL, MSN (must install their software)
 - iv. Additional phone line, \$20 to \$30/mo

- v. \$25/mo – DSL – Cavalier, must have Cavalier phone service, no extra software needed, no extra phone line needed, multiple computer hook up capable
 - vi. \$29/mo – DSL – Verizon, must have Verizon phone service, no extra software needed, no extra phone line needed, multiple computer hook up capable
 - vii. \$45 to \$50/mo – Cable high speed – Comcast, no extra software needed, no extra phone line needed, multiple computer hook up capable
 - b. At 56K dial up speed, it takes up to 4 minutes to download 1mb of data
 - c. High speed is “always on” and ready to go
 - d. DSL is 8 to 10 times faster than Dial up
 - e. Comcast is 3 to 4 times faster than DSL, 30 to 40 times faster than Dial up
 - f. Speed vary, DSL or Comcast not available in all areas
 - g. No service is 100%, all the time
 - h. Firewall security already built into Windows XP
 - i. A router provides additional security
6. Proper Email setup
- a. Check every 2 or 3 days
 - b. Empty In Box when checked
 - c. Web based vs. Program based
 - d. Most anti-spam software does not work
 - e. Make sure back up catches program based email data
7. Proper Backups
- a. Store all created files in My Documents
 - b. Automatic programs vs. Manual
 - c. CD or DVD backup
 - d. External Hard drives
 - e. Off line storage

Things to consider:

1. Spend about \$80 per year on computer maintenance (Anti Spyware and Anti Virus Licenses, Back up media)
2. Update productivity applications at least every other major update
3. Replace any computer that is 6 years old
4. Replace Windows 95, 98, and ME
5. Have proper Surge protection for electrical outlets, network and phone connections
6. Leave your computer on 24/7. Turn off and unplug when on vacation.

Disclaimer:

1. The above guidelines are based on supporting computers, networks, Internet connections and computer users over the last 20 years
2. Some directions reflect personal preferences. There might be other answers or solutions not listed that could be equally as good or better.
3. Patrick Wettstone does not have all the answers and may even be wrong occasionally.