

**The Top 10 Ways to  
Speed Up  
Your Windows PC  
Right Now –  
For Free!**

**By:  
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All Windows computers slow down over time – this is simply a fact of life, but that doesn't mean that you have to live with it. Contrary to what the computer industry as a whole would have you believe, you do not have to upgrade your hardware every few months to keep your computer fast and responsive to your requests – you just need to clean up after it once in a while.

The top ten things that you can do to speed up your computer right now are:

- 1) Remove Unused Applications
- 2) Stop Un-needed Programs From Running at Startup
- 3) Defragment Your Hard Drive(s)
- 4) Run the Hard Drive Cleanup Utility
- 5) Download and Run a Registry Cleanup Tool
- 6) Delete Temporary Internet Files
- 7) Run a Spyware Removal Tool Regularly
- 8) Turn Off Any Un-needed Services
- 9) Turn Off Fancy Animations
- 10) Change the Number of Colors in Your Display

There are countless software programs available on the Internet today that will perform most of these tasks for you, but they usually come with a price tag attached. These tasks can be accomplished completely for free; it just takes a little more effort.

We are going to go through each one of these items in the next few pages, step-by-step, to make sure that your computer is running at its' full potential. The key to keeping your computer running as smoothly and quickly as possible is to perform these tasks on your computer regularly. We offer you a free tool for making this easier at the end of this guide

It is HIGHLY recommended that you create a backup of your computer before undertaking any of these steps. This will help insure that you can go back to a previous working version of your system if you make a mistake. The easiest way to do this is to create a system restore point. For instructions on doing this, press F1 on your computer and search for "Create Restore Point."

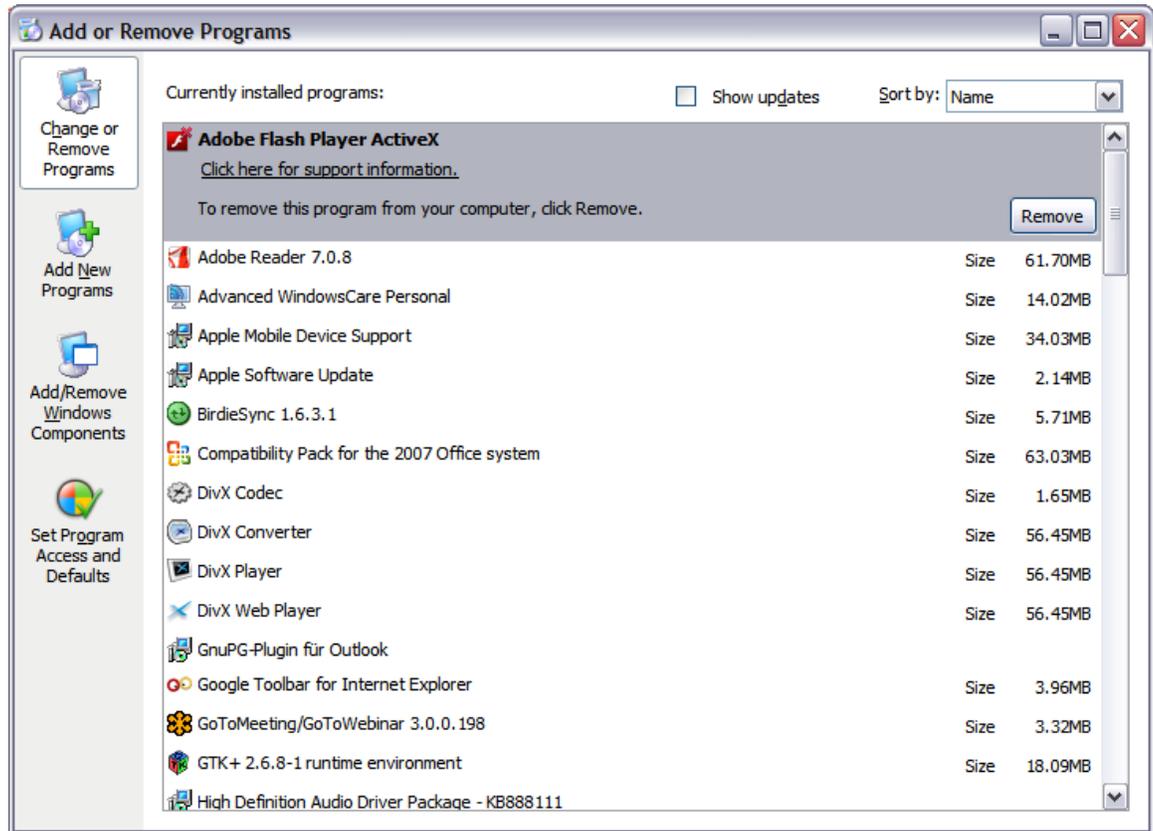
### **Remove Unused Applications**

This one item will probably remove half of your problems right away. Think about it, do you really need that video game that your kids installed two years ago? Removing the programs you don't use will free up space on your hard drive, giving your computer more room to work with.

Here are the steps:

- 1) Click Start, click on "Control Panel" in the Start Menu.
- 2) Double-Click on "Add or Remove Programs" in the window that opens.

- 3) A new window will open, listing all the programs you have installed on your computer.



- 4) Scroll through the list of programs, look for anything that you do not recognize or that you have not used in a while and don't need.
- 5) Click on the name of a program that you would like to remove; it will expand and show more details about the application.
- 6) On the right side of the highlighted application, there is a button labeled "Remove", click it.
- 7) You will be asked to confirm that you would like to remove the selected application. Click on the 'OK' or 'Yes' button.
- 8) Each application is different, so you may be presented with an uninstall wizard. If this happens, follow the directions on the wizard and you should be through in no time.
- 9) Once the application has been removed, you may be prompted to restart your computer. Click 'NO' or 'Restart Later' – you want to keep uninstalling programs until you are down to the applications that you use on a regular basis.
- 10) You should be presented with the list of installed applications again, but with the application you previously selected removed from the list. You can now repeat steps 4 through 9 until you have removed all the applications you no longer need.

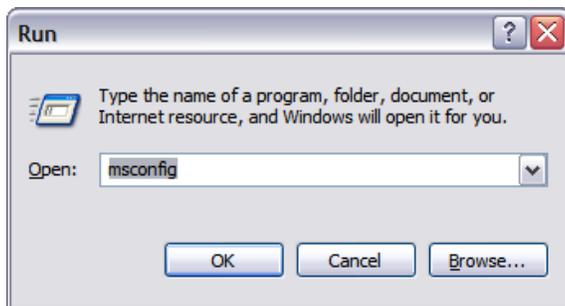
As a general rule, try to leave anything that reads "Microsoft" or "Windows" alone. There are several utilities on this list that Windows needs to function properly, so it is

best just to leave those alone unless you know for sure that you can remove them from your computer safely. When in doubt, contact an expert – we can help you get your computer up and running quickly in the comfort of your own home. To schedule an appointment, call 1-888-201-4131 or email [info@verticalpenguin.com](mailto:info@verticalpenguin.com) and someone will contact you about your request.

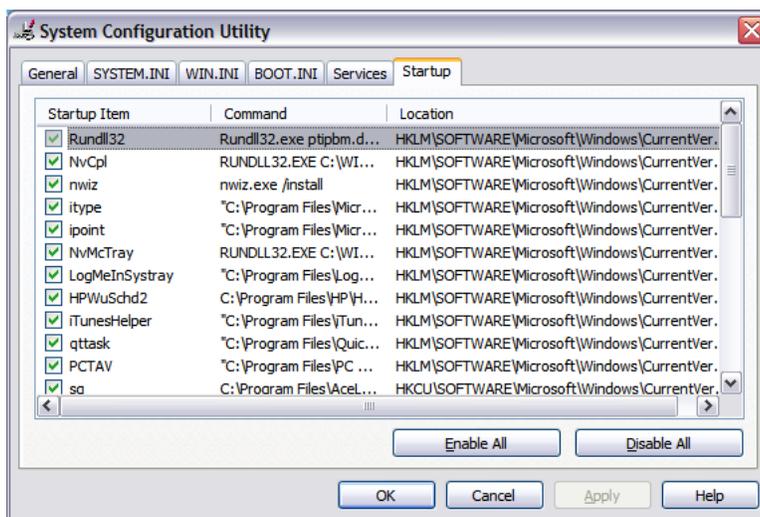
## Stop Un-needed Programs From Running at Startup

One of the biggest problems that most users don't even realize they have is they are running too many programs when their computer starts up. This is not their fault, many times the tools they use on a regular basis will add programs to the startup sequence without ever asking the user. These programs pile up and eventually cause the computer to begin crawling along, barely able to perform the simplest of tasks. Fortunately, there is a simple way of fixing this:

- 1) Click Start, then Run.
- 2) On the window that opens, type "msconfig" without the quotes, click OK.



- 3) The System Configuration Utility will open, click on the 'Startup' tab along the top – DO NOT change anything on any of the other tabs.



- 4) On the Startup tab you will find a list of applications that run at startup along with check-boxes along the left hand side
- 5) DO NOT start un-checking everything on this list. There are programs on the list that Windows requires to run correctly, such as Explorer.
- 6) You can uncheck anything that has a location of “Startup”, which is the user defines startup folder. You can also remove anything with a name that you recognize as a program that was previously uninstalled or something that you don’t need to run when your computer starts. Common suggestions are qttask, iTunesHelper, jusched, and anything with the word “tray” in it. You may also want to refer to the list of windows application names and what they mean, along with Paul Collin’ Startup Application List located at <http://www.sysinfo.org/startuplist.php>
- 7) When you are finished unchecking the programs that you do not want to run at startup, click OK. You may be prompted to restart your computer – select ‘No’ or ‘Restart Later.’ \*\*

\*\*Please note that if you have made any changes to the startup configuration, you will be notified of these changes when you do finally restart your computer. You will also be given the option to run the system configuration utility again – you should decline when you are given the option.

To keep these or any other programs from placing themselves in the startup folder without you knowing, it is recommended that you download the Ace Utilities Startup Guard Program. It is a free tool which you can download at <http://www.acelogix.com/freeware.html>. The program will warn you whenever an application tries to setup something to run when your computer starts.

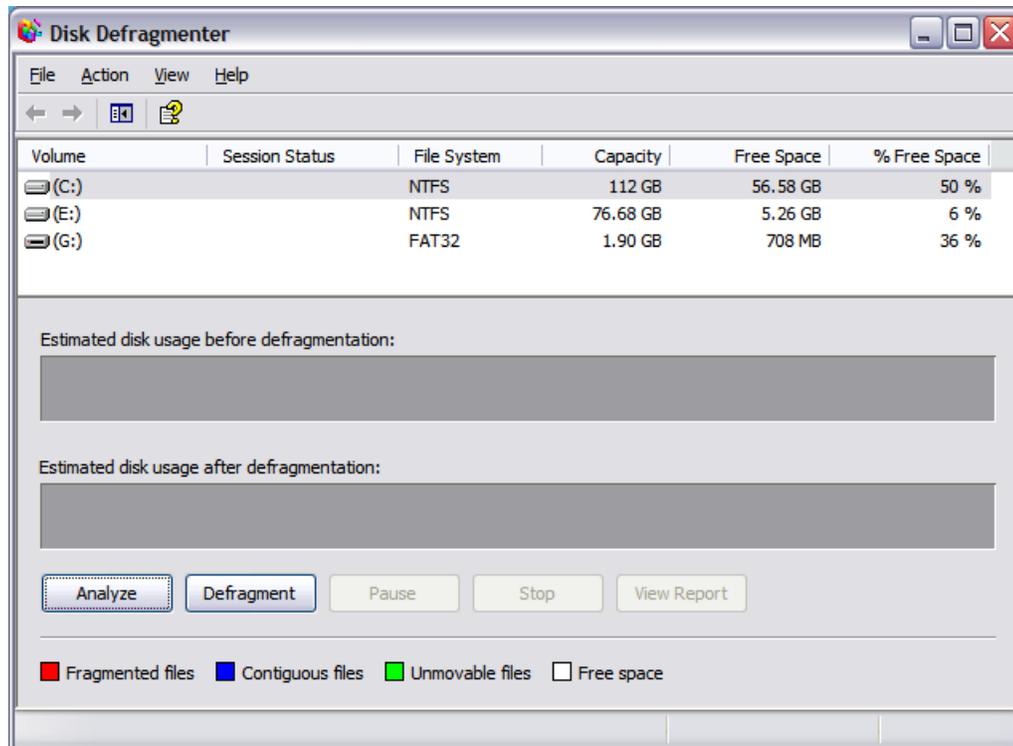
At this point, you should have most of your speed back, but we are not stopping here. We are going to get your computer performance back to what it was when you first brought it home, let’s continue.

### **Defragment Your Hard Drive**

This is one of those things that most people do not think about or even know about their computer doing. As time goes by, your hard drive starts to fill up. After a while your computer tries to make the best use of the space that is available by breaking your files into small chunks and fitting them next to other files that don’t fill up all their available space. After a while, your computer has to go to several different parts of your hard drive just to open up a single file. This is called fragmentation, and it can really slow down your system.

Fortunately, there is a solution – the Windows Disk Defragmenter tool. This tool scans your hard drive looking for files that have been split up and tries to place the pieces next to each other on the hard drive. This can take quite a while to run, so it is something that you would generally do while you take your lunch break or just run it over night.

- 1) Click Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, then Disk Defragmenter.
- 2) You will see a window listing all of the hard drives on your system, but typically you will only see one.



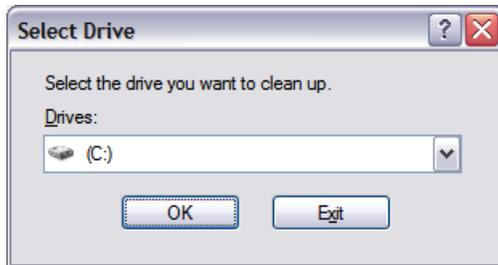
- 3) Make sure your primary hard drive (the one where Windows is installed) is selected and click the 'Defragment' button.
- 4) Walk away, take a nap, grab something to eat, come back in a couple of hours.
- 5) When the process is complete, you will see two displays, on your screen – before defragmentation and after defragmentation. The continuous files will be marked in blue, the fragmented files in red. Hopefully there is a lot of blue on your screen. \*\*

\*\* Not all files can be defragmented – some system files will always be locked, so they can't be changed. The only way to completely defragment a primary hard drive is to remove it from the computer and defragment it with another computer – not the easiest thing in the world to do so we don't cover it here. If you would like someone to help you completely defragment your primary hard drive, please email [info@verticalpenguin.com](mailto:info@verticalpenguin.com) or call 1-888-201-4131 and someone will help you with your request.

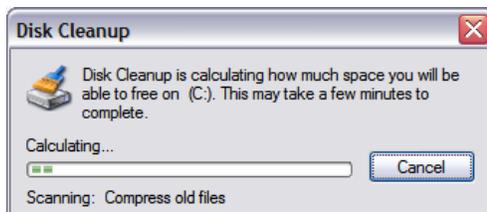
### Run The Hard Drive Cleanup Utility

The hard drive cleanup utility is another one of these tools that takes a while to run. In general, it checks to make sure that your hard drive is healthy and repairs any bad blocks that it find. It also attempts to remove any unneeded files from your drive – old drivers, temporary Internet files, and files that you haven't used in a while.

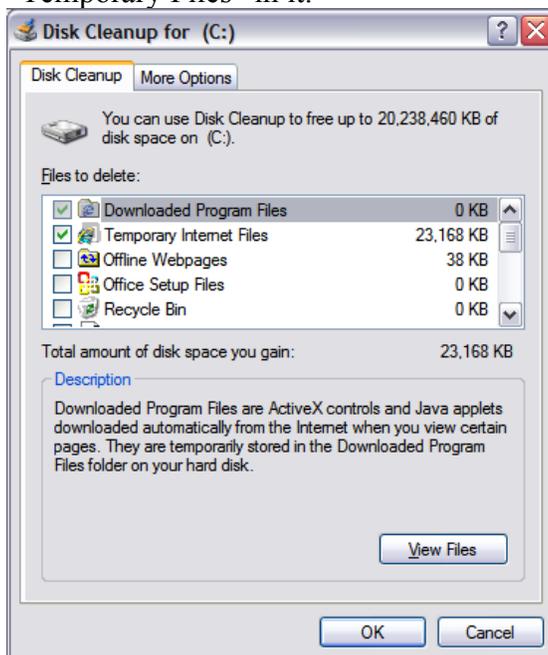
- 1) Click Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Tools, then Disk Cleanup.
- 2) You will be asked to select which drive you want to cleanup, choose your primary drive and click OK.



- 3) You will now see a progress bar on your screen – the tool is trying to determine how much space it can free from your hard drive. After a few minutes it will offer you a list of types of files that you will be able to remove from your computer, and how much space can be gained by removing them.



- 4) Select which files you would like to remove – but be careful, you may actually need something. Your best bets are usually anything that has the words “Temporary Files” in it.



- 5) When you are ready to delete the selected files, click 'OK'
- 6) Once again, walk away and let the system run. With this tool, it is recommended that you let it run overnight.

This tool is most useful for removing the files that you would generally be unable to find.

## Download and Run a Registry Cleanup Tool

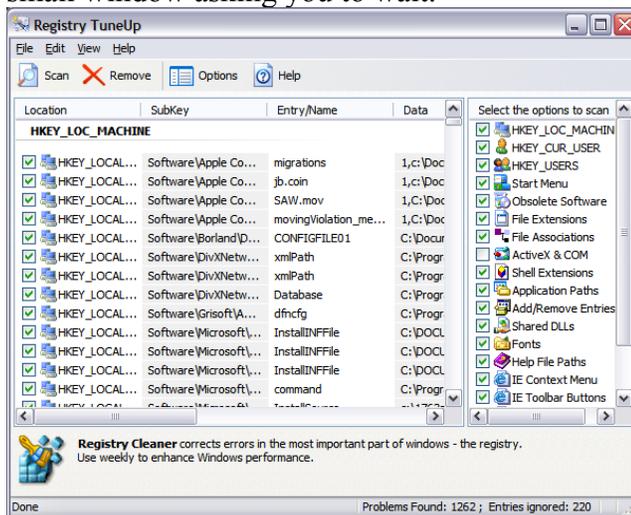
A registry cleanup tool is a program that runs through your registry (a fancy name for a configuration file) looking for errors and correcting them. There are several very good ones on the market that offer you a trial, but some of them do require you to purchase the entire package before getting full functionality. We have found no free tools that perform a decent job of cleaning your registry, but there are a couple of full features trials that will work nicely the first time, which is generally all you need.

The registry cleaner that we recommend is again from Ace Utilities: it is called Registry TuneUp. At the time of this writing, the trial version lasts for about 30 days, they may have changed it by the time you read this. Not only does it actually clean the registry for you, it will tell you why each registry entry that it removes is not needed. There are several features available for advanced users, but you will generally not need them.

When you first run Registry TuneUp, you will be asked to create a system restore point – this is HIGHLY recommended. In general, it is always a good idea to create a restore point because if something goes wrong, you can always go back to a configuration that works – a very good thing.

You will also be asked if you would like to run in expert mode – decline. Click on Finish, and you will be presented with the main Registry TuneUp window. From here, follow these steps:

- 1) Click Scan – you will see a Registry TuneUp running in the background with a small window asking you to wait.



- 2) When the application is finished, you will be presented with a dialog asking you to delete all the bad entries that the tool found. Click 'Remove'
- 3) There is no step three – you're done!

This is one of the simplest tools available for cleaning your registry – it works very well. You can download Registry TuneUp by going to this URL:  
<http://www.acelegix.com/regtune.html>

### **Delete Temporary Internet Files**

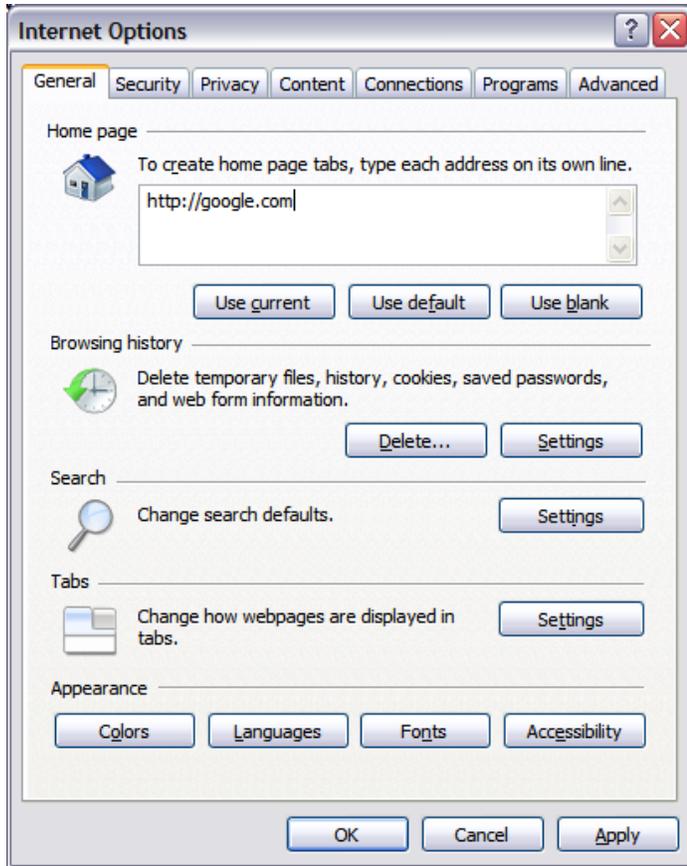
As you browse the Internet, you look at pictures, download music, videos, and web pages. Imagine how slow the Internet would be if you had to download those files every time you went to a web page – it would be almost unusable. To prevent this from happening your computer stores some, if not all, of these files locally on your hard drive where it can access them quickly if it needs to. Every so often your computer will get rid of these temporary files to make sure that you are seeing the most up to date version of the web page you are looking at. This is a process called caching, and it is the Internet users' friend.

However, even your closest friends can bring unexpected guests to your party. If you only look at a web page once and never return, the cached files on your system will never be removed because the browser you used never needed to refresh them. These files can build up over time causing your computer to slow down.

Most of these files would have been removed when you used the Disk Cleanup tool as described above, but if you use a web browser other than Internet Explorer (Firefox, for example) you will need to remove these files yourself. We have included instructions for removing these files in both Internet Explorer and Firefox:

Internet Explorer:

- 1) Click on the 'Tools' menu, then on 'Internet Options'
- 2) On the first tab that opens, you will see a section called 'Browsing history'. In this section there is a button labeled 'Delete', click it.



- 3) A new window will open listing the different types of files that the browser tracks. You can delete the Temporary Internet Files, Cookies, and History without much worry. We generally do not recommend that you delete Form Data or Passwords as these are usually very useful to have automatically populated for you.



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