

Keeping your computer physically clean

Dust isn't just unattractive—it can potentially damage or even destroy parts of your computer. Cleaning your computer regularly will help you **keep it working properly** and **avoid expensive repairs**.

Watch the video below to learn how to keep a computer clean. Note: New video coming soon!

Computer Basics: Cleaning Your Computer



Cleaning the keyboard

Dust, food, liquid, and other particles can get stuck underneath the keys on your keyboard, which can prevent it from working properly. The **basic cleaning tips** below can help keep your keyboard clean.

- 1 **Unplug** the keyboard from the USB or PS/2 port. If the keyboard is plugged into the PS/2 port, you will need to shut down the computer before

- unplugging it.
- 2 Turn the keyboard **upside down** and gently shake it to remove dirt and dust.
 - 3 Use a can of **compressed air** to clean between the keys.



- 4 Moisten a **cotton cloth** or **paper towel** with rubbing alcohol and use it to clean the tops of the keys. Do not pour alcohol or any other liquid directly onto the keys.
- 5 **Reconnect** the keyboard to the computer once it is dry. If you are connecting it to a PS/2 port, you will need to connect it **before** turning on the computer.

Dealing with liquids

If you **spill liquid** on the keyboard, quickly shut down the computer and disconnect the keyboard. Then **turn the keyboard upside down** and allow the liquid to drain.

If the liquid is sticky, you will need to hold the keyboard on its side under running water to **rinse** away the sticky liquid. Then turn the keyboard upside down to drain for two days before reconnecting it. Please note that keyboard may not be fixable at this point, but the method above is probably the best option.

To prevent this situation altogether, we recommend keeping drinks away from the computer area.

Cleaning the mouse

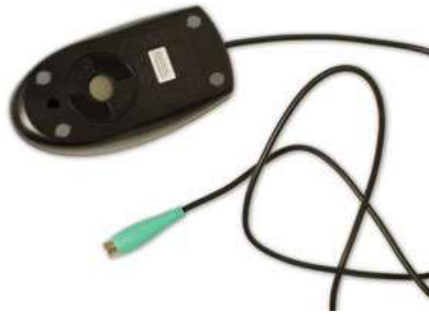
There are two main mouse types: **optical** and **mechanical**. Each is cleaned in basically the same way, although the mechanical mouse requires a bit more work.

- ▶ **Optical mice** require **no internal cleaning** because they do not contain any rotating parts; however, they can get **sticky** over time as dust collects near

the light emitter. This can cause erratic cursor movement or prevent the mouse from working properly.



- ▶ **Mechanical mice** are especially susceptible to **dust** and **particles** that can accumulate inside the mouse, which can make it difficult to track—or move—properly. If the mouse pointer does not move smoothly, the mouse may need to be cleaned.



The **basic cleaning tips** below will help keep your mouse clean:

- 1 **Unplug** the mouse from the USB or PS/2 port. If the mouse is plugged into the PS/2 port, you will need to shut down the computer before unplugging it.
- 2 Moisten a **cotton cloth** with rubbing alcohol, and use it to clean the top and bottom of the mouse.
- 3 If you have a **mechanical mouse**, remove the **tracking ball** by turning the **ball-cover ring** counter-clockwise. Then clean the tracking ball and the inside of the mouse with a **cotton cloth** moistened with rubbing alcohol.



- 4 **Allow all of the parts to dry** before reassembling and reconnecting the mouse. If you are connecting it to a PS/2 port, you will need to connect it

before turning on the computer.

If you just want to give the mouse a quick cleaning, place it on a **clean sheet of paper** and **move the mouse back and forth**. Some of the dust and particles should rub off onto the paper.

Cleaning the monitor

Dirt, fingerprints, and dust can make your computer screen difficult to read; however, it's easy to **clean your screen** when needed. There are monitor-cleaning kits you can buy, but they may damage your monitor if they're designed for a different type of monitor. For example, a monitor cleaner that is designed for **glass screens** may not work with some **non-glass LCD screens**. The safest method is simply to use a **soft clean cloth** moistened with **water**.

Do not use glass cleaner to clean a monitor. Many screens have anti-glare coatings that can be damaged by glass cleaner.

- 1 **Turn off** the computer.
- 2 **Unplug** the monitor from the power. If you are using a laptop, unplug the laptop.
- 3 Use a **soft clean cloth** moistened with **water** to wipe the screen clean.



Do not spray any liquids directly onto the screen. The liquid could leak into the monitor and damage the internal components.

Tips for cleaning other computer surfaces

From time to time, you should clean your computer case and the sides and back of the monitor to avoid a buildup of dust and dirt. Here are a few tips you can use when cleaning these surfaces.

- ▶ Dust is your computer's main enemy. Use an **anti-static** cloth to lightly dust your computer casing. **Do not** use furniture cleaners or strong solvents.



- ▶ Use a can of **compressed air** to blow out debris from the air intake slots.
- ▶ **Ammonia** diluted with water—or **glass cleaner** comprised mostly of ammonia and water—is a safe cleaning solution for **computer surfaces**. The milder the solution, the better.
- ▶ Clean the **monitor housing** and **case** (but **not** the monitor screen) by spraying a safe cleaning solution onto a paper towel or anti-static cloth and wiping in a downward motion.

Keep it cool

Don't restrict airflow around your computer. A computer can generate a lot of heat, so the casing has **fans** that keep it from overheating. Avoid stacking papers, books, and other items around your computer.

Many computer desks have an **enclosed compartment** for the computer case. If you have this type of desk, you may want to position the case so it is not against the back side of the desk. If the compartment has a door, you may want to leave it open to improve airflow.