

How to fix your PC – yourself!

Below is a list of things you can do to check your own computer for simple problems before having a technician repair it. If possible, *be sure you back up important files* before attempting repairs on your computer. Remember, if you are not comfortable doing any step, don't do it – call a repair specialist!

Start with the basics:

Is everything connected? Physically check and make sure all cords / connections are fully seated. Make sure you check each cord, *especially* the monitor. Ensure the power cord is plugged into a surge suppressor, which will be plugged into a properly rated receptacle.

Shut It Down-

Executing a proper shutdown of your computer and waiting a minute before restarting is sometimes all that is needed to restore your computer to working order. If there is an internet connection problem, also power off your router / hub / cable modem, wait a minute, then power up in reverse order. Always wait 1 minute between turning on devices; this allows them to reset themselves.

Power it up-

Turn on the surge suppressor, then the monitor, followed by any peripheral devices [speakers, printer, scanner, etc.]. Lastly, turn the computer on. If it at any point a device won't power up, check them on a separate circuit which you know to be working. Is a breaker tripped / fuse blown? Check the breaker / fuse box. Try another appliance in the surge suppressor and wall outlets to make sure they both are getting power.

Malicious software ['malware'] checks-

Always be sure your antispyware and antivirus [also known as 'security'] software is properly installed and up to date. The major antispyware / antivirus companies usually release updates **at least** once a week. If you do not have 'autoupdate' enable for these programs, download and apply these updates **immediately** when they are released. This way your software stays current with the newest threats, which is important since every month hundreds of new threats are discovered. Outdated software *may* pick up a newer version of an old threat but the newest ones can infiltrate and harm your PC.

After you check that software is updated, do a full scan of your system, for both spyware and viruses. Up to date antispyware / antivirus programs should take care of most threats.

If your security program(s) will not run or install, they may be damaged by spyware / viruses. Some of the newer threats are designed to disable out-of-date security software. If you can't get it to run, you may need to bring your PC in for malware removal/repair by a service technician.

Narrow the problem down -

When a single program is not functioning properly, you can try reinstalling the particular program from the original software package. If the program causing the problem is one which has critical or irreplaceable data, back it up *again*.

Modem ['dial-up'] problems: check for dial tone-

Dial-up internet connections which cannot connect - if you do not hear a dial tone, hear static, or a loud "hum," have your phone lines checked by the phone company. Using an extra phone, plug it into the phone jack on your PC's modem. You should hear a dial tone. If your modem does not have a phone jack, unplug the phone cord from the modem and plug it into your phone. You should hear a dial tone to signify that your phone line is working properly.

Ventilation for your PC -

Do you have all your vents exposed for free air circulation? Do all the fans run? If you cannot feel any air movement from your computer or you can see /hear that the fan is not turning, your computer could be overheating. Symptoms include: system 'lockup' /crashes, program errors, and component failure. Generally speaking, the newer the PC, the hotter it runs. Thus heat sinks and fans, once optional, are now absolutely critical.

Beware friends / relatives bearing gifts -

Did your problem start right after someone installed a new program or peripheral? If so, try removing the program or device. Most newer software and peripherals come with a built-in 'uninstall' feature accessible from the program menu under the 'Start' button. Otherwise:

Windows XP: in order to remove a program click on Start>Settings>Control Panel> and select 'Add/Remove Programs'. Select the program you wish to remove from your computer, then click the 'Add/Remove' button. When removal is complete, you may get a message telling you to restart your computer. Even if you don't get such a message, it is still good practice to restart.

Windows 95/98/ME: click on Start>Settings>Control Panels and select 'System'. In the 'System Properties' window, click on the "Device Manager" tab. Find the device you would like to remove and highlight it. Click on the 'Remove' button at the bottom of the window. After completing the program removal [and possibly restarting], go back to the Control Panel window, and click on 'Add/Remove Programs'. Check to see if the software / device you are removing has installed any supporting programs, and if so, select the program(s) and click the 'Remove' button. When you have removed the program(s), shut your computer down and [*if removing a device*] unplug it. Physically remove the device[if applicable], put any covers back on, plug your PC back in, and turn it on.

If none of these tips has fixed your problem, calling us is the next step!