

Cleaning Tips To Keep Your PC Healthy

by Gloria Kraegel

Spring is a time of birth and new beginnings. Spring also means that we spend time throwing open the windows and clearing our homes of accumulated clutter. The same should be true of our offices and our computers.

Too often we buy a computer, stick it on the floor "out of the way" and then use it. We turn it on and leave it for days at a time or we turn it on and off daily. How often do you think about the dust collecting on the fan? Dust is the number one cause of overheating and hardware failure. Smoke, pets, kids, coffee, lunch while you check email, and more contribute to PC problems. That's why we should remember that regular maintenance is just as important to the longevity of our computers as it is to our cars and our personal health.

Before you do anything you should make sure you have a soft dust cloth, LCD anti-static cloth or LCD cleaner & soft cloth, can of compressed air, vacuum, rubbing alcohol, cotton swabs. Remember to turn off the power to your computer before you begin any cleaning or maintenance. Also, unplug all peripherals and cables from the computer. All "tools" can be purchased at an office supply store and/or a drug store.

The first thing on your honey-do list should be dusting. Wipe your PC with a clean soft dry cloth to remove dust from the case, your work area, and the case of your monitor (not the screen, that's what the LCD cloth is for). Next, open the computer case and remove the "dust-bunnies" that have nested there. Use the compressed air to clean out the remaining dust making sure the nozzle is 4 to 6 inches away from main board components. Be careful not to disturb jumpers or dislodge cables in the process. and don't use a standard vacuum cleaner to clean the dust out of your computer case. When finished close the case and position the computer back in place, but leave it unplugged for the time being.

Cleaning the monitor is considered a delicate operation and should be done with care. Don't use Windex at all and don't spray the LCD cleaner directly on the screen. Spray the LCD on a clean cloth and then gently wipe the screen or use an anti-static LCD cloth.

Your keyboard gets a lot of use. It collects dust, oil from our fingertips, spilled beverages, and crumbs from lunch while we're checking email. You can use a standard vacuum with a brush attachment to clean the keys. Using a cotton swab dipped in rubbing alcohol is a good way to clean accumulated grime from individual keys.

Your mouse needs cleaning, too. If you're using a mouse with a ball assembly gently remove the ball cover and remove the ball. Use a cotton swab dipped in rubbing alcohol to clean dust from the rollers. The compressed air is also a good cleaning solution for removing dust inside the mouse. Once completed reassemble. For an optical mouse use compressed air or follow the manufacturer's guidelines.

Now you can connect all peripherals, cables, and the power cord to the computer. The best cleaning tip is to clean your computer on a regular basis to keep it humming.

Gloria Kraegel is a nonprofit consultant providing consulting, training, and information resources to nonprofit organizations. For more information and additional resources visit <http://www.greatcreations.com>