



Tips for Cleaning your computer

We use our computers constantly in modern life and tend to take it for granted but it needs to be looked after and cleaned on a regular basis just like other household equipment and appliances. Always make sure that you shut down the computer and switch off the power before starting any kind of cleaning.

Cleaning the Keyboard

First, unplug the keyboard from the computer and then turn it upside down and gently shake it to loosen any debris such as grit, food crumbs and dust that may be trapped under the individual keys. If you have a can of compressed air, spray this between the keys or you can also use a vacuum cleaner (with care), with specialised vacuum attachments for dealing with small crevices. If you do not have either, try using a small, soft-bristled brush, such as an old toothbrush to work between the individual keys but take care and go slowly.

Next, wipe the keyboard with a damp cloth and use a cotton bud between the keys. If you have stains on the keyboard, such as ink, try using a ball of cotton wool saturated with nail varnish remover or a commercial alcohol wipe. For stains from drinks, such as coffee, make sure that you tackle these immediately – save any data you are working on (using the mouse rather than key stroke commands) and then quickly unplug the keyboard and turn it upside down to enable as much liquid as possible to drip off the keyboard. Then wipe it clean with a damp cloth.

Cleaning the Computer Screen

For this job, it is best to use a soft, anti-static cloth and a specially formulated screen cleaner. Check your manual first to determine exactly what kind of screen you have, as many screens have an anti-glare coating, which can be damaged if you use a household cleaner (even traditional glass cleaners). This is especially important in laptop computers. If your screen is anti-glare, it is better to just use a soft cloth dampened with plain water. (But make sure that you go over the screen with a dry cloth at the end, to prevent watermarks and streaking).

Always make sure that you spray any liquids onto the cloth and not directly onto any part of the computer! Alternatively, you can buy commercial screen wipes especially designed for general



computer cleaning. If you are using these, always wipe your screen first and then the keyboard, the mouse and finally, the casing.

Anti-static sprays are very popular and work on the principle that they leave a neutral charge after cleaning, so that there is no positive or negative charge to attract dust particles. While some people question their effectiveness, they can be a good investment.

Cleaning the CPU

Start with the vacuum cleaner to clean all cooling slots of collected dust – do not use compressed air here as it can force large amounts of dust back inside the CPU, which has an abrasive action like pouring in lots of fine sand. Keeping the vents clean is very important as it helps to maximise airflow and thus improve cooling, which is the key in maintaining the longevity of the CPU.

Wipe the outside casing with a soft cloth that has been dampened with plain water or with a specially formulated computer cleaning fluid. Remember, always spray the cleaning fluid onto the cloth and not directly onto your computer equipment. For inside the casing, use compressed air only as any slight mistake with the vacuum or a brush or cloth can cause serious, permanent damage to the processor. Remember also to always check your warranty before starting to take your computer apart.

