

5 easy ways to tune up your PC

If you have noticed that your PC isn't running as fast as it did when you first brought it home, the following 5 suggestions may help you regain some of that performance. Follow the steps outlined below at least once a month to keep your PC in tip-top shape.

1. [Spyware and Adware Removal](#) - remove unwanted and possibly harmful programs
2. [Virus Removal](#) - detect and remove viruses
3. [Startup Programs](#) - stop unnecessary programs from running
4. [Run Defrag and Scandisk](#) - simple tools to keep your hard drive running smoothly
5. [Update Windows and Drivers](#) - keep your operating system up to date

1. Spyware and Adware Removal

What is Spyware and/or Adware?

Spyware is any technology that aids in gathering information about a person or organization without their knowledge or explicit permission. Spyware silently transmits user information via the Internet to advertisers. In addition, Spyware will very often cause your PC to perform **very poorly** (slow browsing and downloads, program crashes etc).

Spyware may be found:

- Bundled inside of shareware or freeware applications
- In free versions of otherwise licensed applications
- In peer-to-peer (P2P) and other file sharing programs

Some applications that include Spyware, are: Xupiter, Gator, SaveNow, NewDotNet, BDE Projector, HotBar, Bonzai Buddy, Comet Cursor, Morpheus, WebHancer, WinMX, Kazaa and Wild Tangent.

To remove Spyware from your computer, Comcast recommends that you download and install the [Security Manager](#). Once you have the Security Manager installed, follow the steps outlined in the FAQ titled [How do I use the Security Manager to remove Spyware from my computer?](#). There are other Spyware and Adware removal programs available online, however you should exercise caution when selecting a program, as many of them claim to remove Spyware but in fact install Spyware themselves. The Comcast [Security Forums](#) are a great place to ask the experts for advice.

2. Virus Removal

A virus can cause many problems, the least harmful (but most noticeable) of which may be decreasing the performance of your PC. Comcast has partnered with McAfee Inc. to offer all of our customers a 25% discount on [McAfee VirusScan](#).

There are also free online anti-virus scanners, such as [HouseCall](#) by Trend Micro.

3. Startup Programs

Many of the programs installed on your PC may have, by default, set themselves to run each time your PC starts. These programs will take up system resources (memory, processor cycles etc) even though you're not using them. Check your system tray right after your PC starts and see how many icons are showing - this can be a good (but not definitive) indication of what's starting each time you turn on your computer.



For each of these programs, check the settings or configuration screen for a box labeled "Run at Windows Startup" (or similar). By manually starting programs as you need them, rather than having them start automatically when you turn your PC on, your start time will decrease and your system will run much faster.

It is important to note that not all programs that start on their own will have an icon in the system tray. Stopping these programs from running at start up can be a bit more difficult. Microsoft has built a program into Windows 98, 98SE, ME and XP called **msconfig**. This program allows you to change which programs will run when your PC starts. It is very important to note that using msconfig can cause serious problems with your PC if the wrong things are changed. It is strongly recommended that only users who are very comfortable using some of the more advanced aspects of their PC should attempt to alter settings via the msconfig utility. Some sites that will guide you in using msconfig have been provided below.

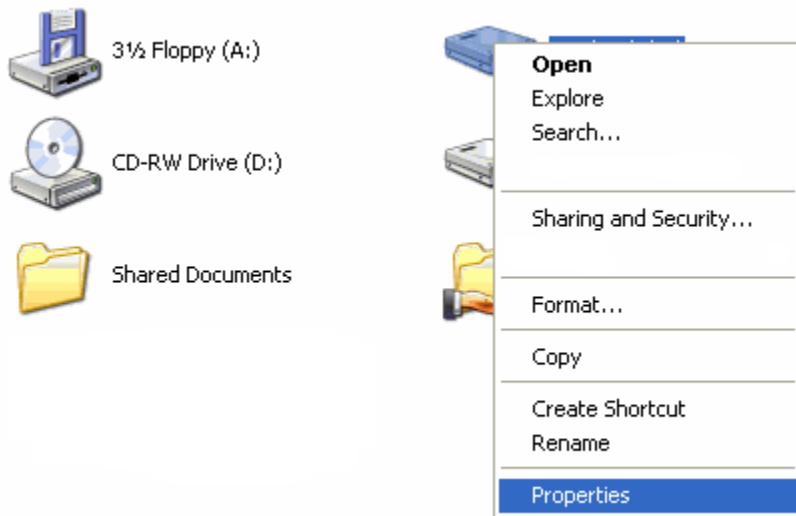
[Microsoft Windows XP resource](#)
[NetSquirrel](#)

4. Run Defrag and Scandisk

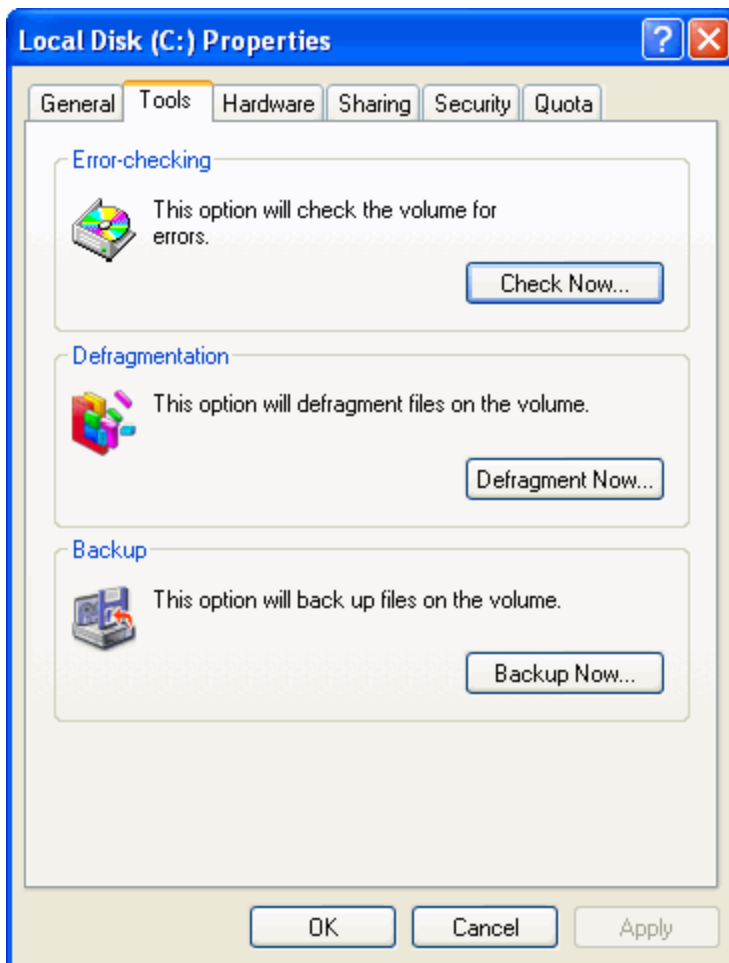
Defrag and Scandisk are important utilities that come with Microsoft Windows to help you tune up your filesystem and make sure that it's running properly. Scandisk checks your hard drive to make sure there aren't any problems with it, and Defrag (short for Disk Defragmenter) organizes your filesystem to help Windows read files faster. It's a good idea to run these two utilities about once a month. Depending on your system, these utilities can take several hours to run, and may slow your system down considerably while running. It's a good idea to start them prior to going to sleep at night, or in the morning before your leave for work.

To run Scandisk in Windows XP, follow the instructions outlined below.

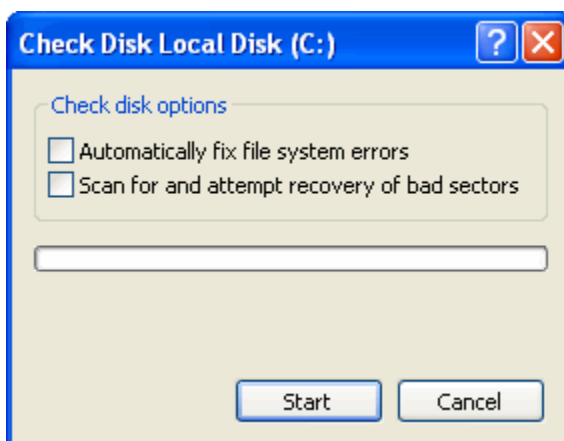
1. Double-click the **My Computer** icon on your desktop. Right-click on the drive you wish to defragment (if you have more than one hard drive, start with the C:\ drive) and select **Properties**



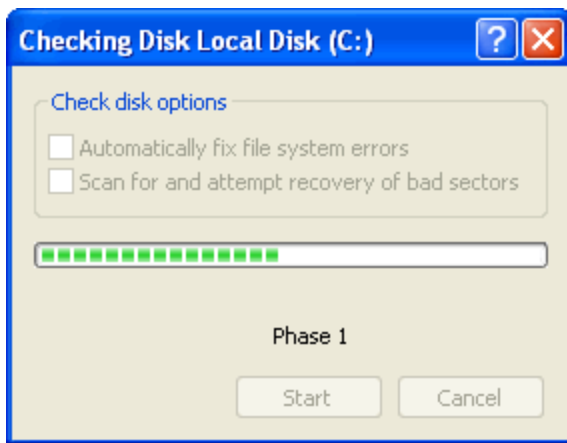
2. Select the **Tools** tab and then click the **Check Now...** button.



3. Click the **Start** button.



4. This process can take some time depending on the size of your hard disk, and any errors that may be found.

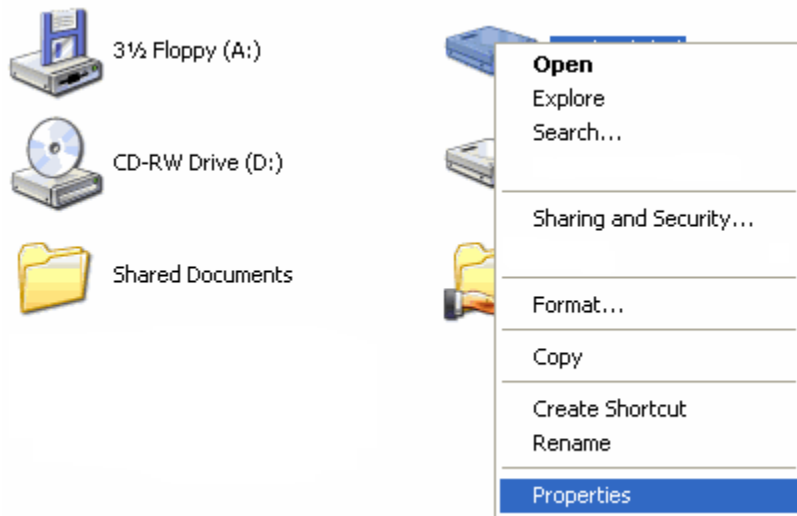


5. A confirmation window will appear once the scan has been completed. At this point, if any errors are found they will be displayed and you will be prompted to repair or fix them. Click **OK** to finish.

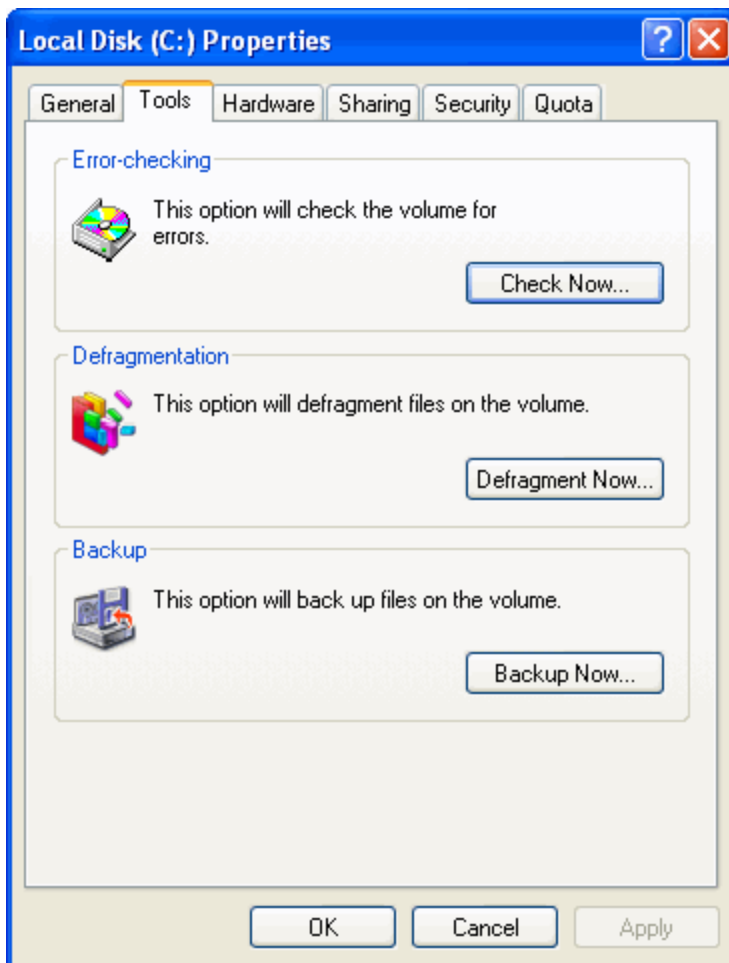


To run Defrag in Windows XP, follow the instructions outlined below.

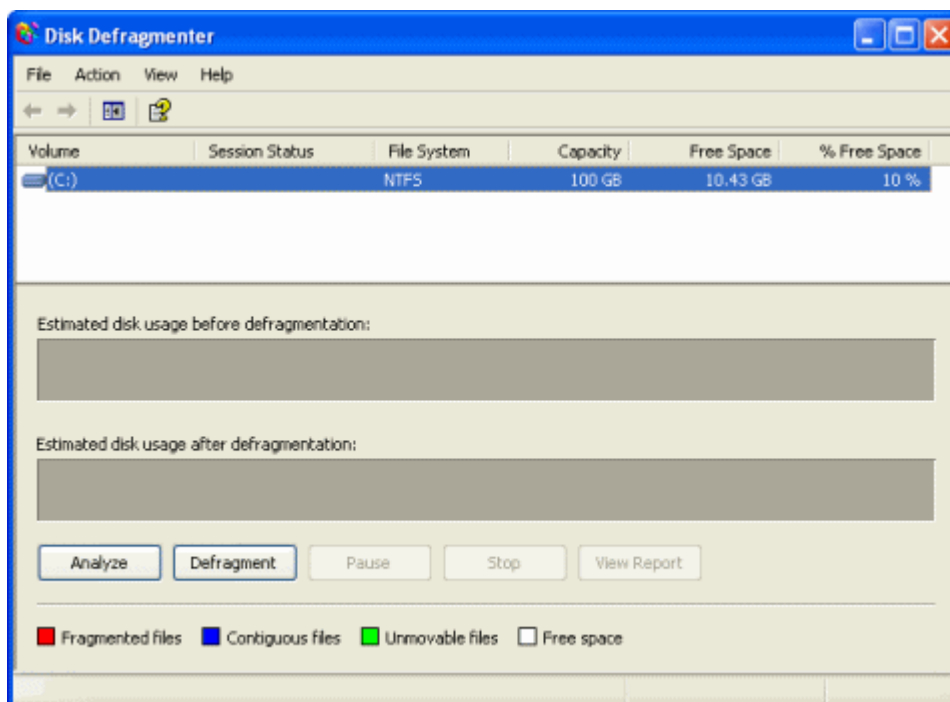
1. Double-click the **My Computer** icon on your desktop. Right-click on the drive you wish to defragment (if you have more than one hard drive, start with the C:\ drive) and select **Properties**



2. Select the **Tools** tab and then click the **Defragment Now...** button.

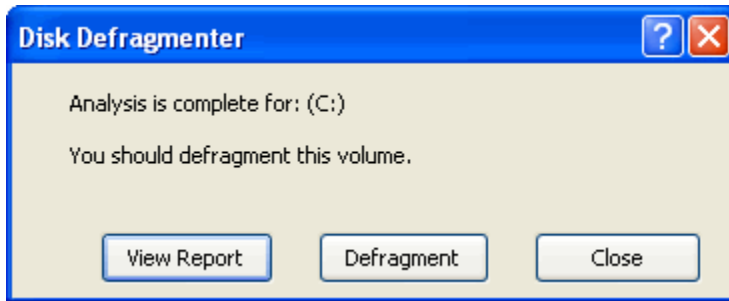


3. Click the **Analyze** button to determine if your drive needs to be defragmented.

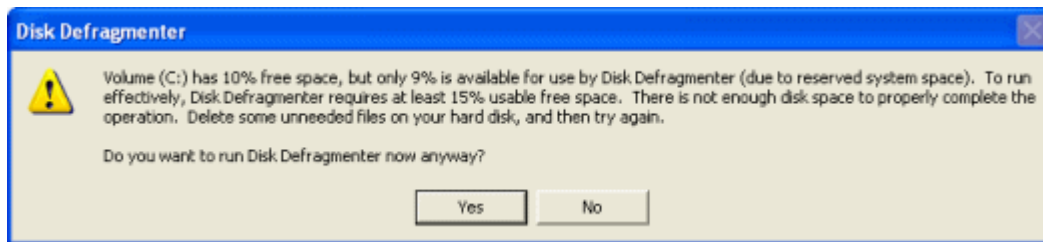


[Click to enlarge](#)

4. After the analysis is complete, select **Defragment** if windows determines your drive needs to be defragmented.



5. If you have less than 15% free disk space, windows will suggest that you uninstall some of your larger programs or delete any unneeded files. After you have created enough free disk space for defrag to run effectively, click **Yes**.

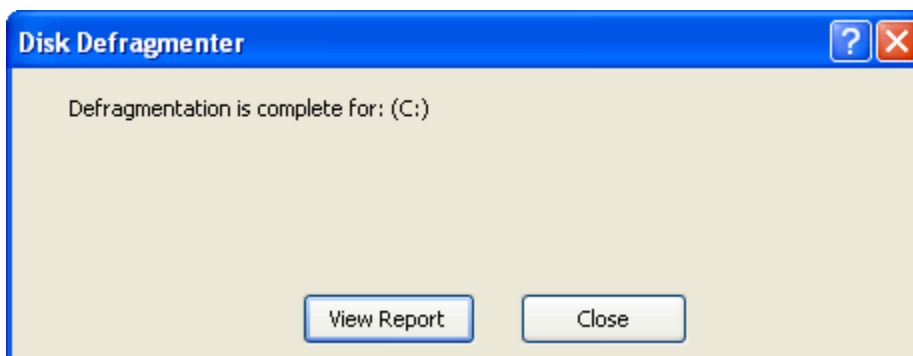


[Click to enlarge](#)

6. As defrag runs, you will see a status bar in the bottom left corner.

(C:) Defragmenting... 18% Compacting Files

7. Once complete, you will be given an opportunity to review a report. Click **View Report** if you wish to read it, or **Close** to finish.



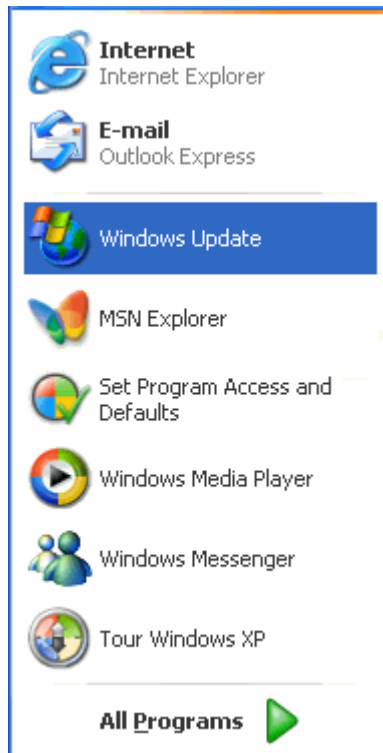
5. Update Windows and Drivers

Windows Update

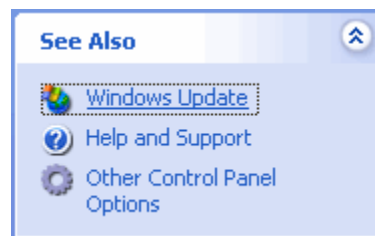
Keeping Windows up to date is not only easy, but helps ensure your PC runs securely and efficiently. Microsoft has created a site that will scan your PC and install any required updates. To set your PC to download and install

these updates automatically, see [this FAQ](#). To run Windows Update manually, follow the instructions outlined below.

1. Find and launch Windows Update. Depending on how you have your PC set up, Windows Update may be found in your start menu or control panel.

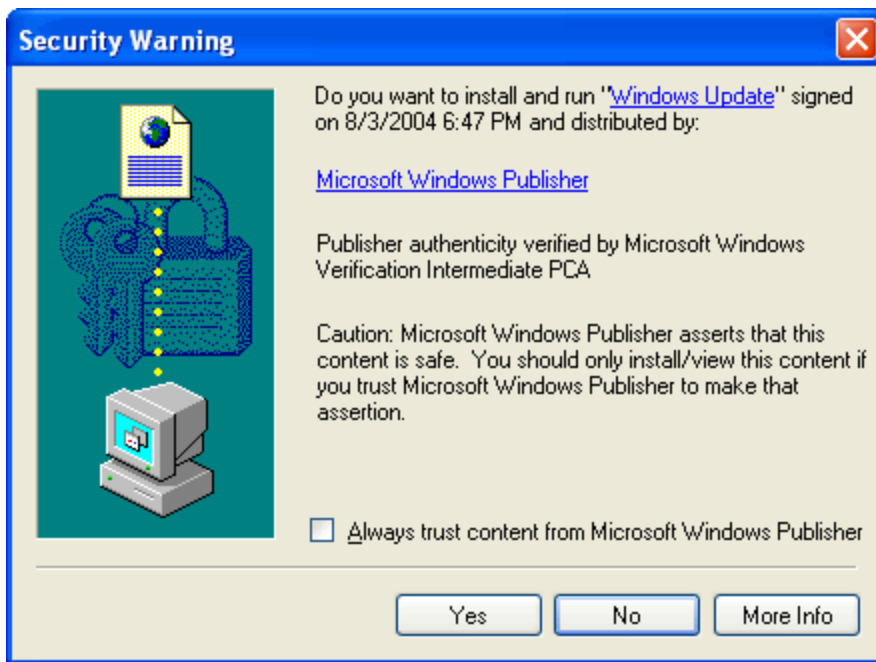


Start menu



Control Panel

2. If you're unable to locate Windows Update, simply point your browser to <http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com>
3. The first time you visit <http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com>, you may be prompted to download and install a security certificate. Click **Yes** when prompted.



4. Follow the instructions provided by Microsoft to finish updating your PC. If you do not set Windows to automatically download and install updates for you, you should use Windows Update at least once a week.

Driver Updates

Using the latest drivers for your hardware can often give your PC a very nice boost in performance. Check with your hardware vendor to make sure that you're using the latest drivers. Comcast has provided a list of common hardware vendor web sites for video cards, sound cards, hard drives and networking equipment.

Video Cards:

ATI: <http://www.ati.com/support/>

Nvidia: <http://www.nvidia.com/content/drivers/drivers.asp>

Hard Drives:

Maxtor: <http://www.maxtor.com/portal/site/Maxtor/>

Western Digital: <http://support.wdc.com/>

Sound Cards:

Creative Labs: <http://us.creative.com/support/>

Networking Hardware:

3com: http://www.3com.com/products/en_US/downloadsindex.jsp

Linksys: <http://www.linksys.com/support/default.asp>

Netgear: <http://kbserver.netgear.com/main.asp>