

How Do I Keep My Hardware in Good Running Order?

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Preventative Hardware Maintenance

Safekeeping

- Locate your computer in an area where there is not much foot traffic. Keeping it out of the way will make sure people don't back into it.
- Once you decide on the location for your computer, keep it there. Frequent movement can cause problems
- Keep the computer on a sturdy table or desk. Rolling carts and other shaky stands are bad ideas.
- Keep the system away from sunlight, heat vents, radiators, and open windows.
- Treat all equipment delicately. Diskettes/CD's, in particular, can develop an alignment problem if you bang them around. Be gentle.
- Avoid etching or burning in a stationary image on the inner surface of the CRT (cathode ray tube) screen. Keep the brightness level low when the unit is on but not being used. Etching cannot be fixed. You will have to replace the tube.

Keep Cool

- Keep the thermostat under 80 degrees Fahrenheit, and preferably above 75 degrees Fahrenheit at a relative humidity of 50%
- Don't subject your diskettes/CD's to extreme temperatures in the car. You may wind up with reading failures, not to mention writing difficulties.
- If you must transport the computer itself, don't leave it in the car too long. Extreme heat or cold can damage chips and other components.

Watch Eating Habits

- Computers don't like the food humans eat. So be careful that no crumbs, sauces, soups or oils get into the machinery if you're eating nearby.

- Sticky fingers can lead to sticky keyboards. Wash your hands.
- Keep soda, coffee and other beverages away from all equipment. Don't put a cup on top of the computer or near the keyboard, you never know when it will get knocked over.
- If a spill does occur and gets into a computer keyboard, take it to a service center immediately for professional cleaning.

Non-Smoking Section

- Be careful when smoking near the equipment. Tobacco smoke contains dust and tars, so don't blow it in the direction of the machine.
- Be careful with ashes too, because they can melt plastic inside the computer.

Keep it Clean

- Vacuum the printer periodically
- Wipe the printer surface area with a mild, all-purpose cleaner.
- Clean the read-write heads of your diskette/CD drive once a week with a proper kit. Follow the instructions carefully.
- Never touch the diskette/CD surface.
- Store diskettes/CD's in protective covers
- Dust covers are available for computers and keyboards. Keep them covered when not in use.
- Under no circumstances should you oil your printer or any other unit of your system. Sealed bearings are designed to operate without external lubrication. Oil will only clog up the machine and collect dust.

Avoid Shocking Experiences

- Unplug all equipment before cleaning.
- Don't keep turning your computer on and off. Let it run the entire day if it will be used periodically. Thermal expansion and contraction causes stress on solder connections and the tiny elements of integrated circuits.
- Check power requirements and make sure your system's power supply is adequate.
- Don't use a power line shared by other appliances or equipment. Voltage variations can result.
- If voltage variations persist, use a power surge protector (line filter) or consult an expert.

Ground Out Static

- Use anti-static floor mats or anti-static mats under your computer. Static

can cause memory loss or alterations, faulty data entry and screen wipe out.

- Regularly use anti-static spray for carpeting, clothing and other areas if mats are not used.
- Keep metal paper clips that have been in a magnetic holder away from diskettes and other equipment.
- If possible, maintain an adequate humidity level in the room where you operate your computer, especially if you have a forced-air heating system in your building or home.