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## 7 Ways to Keep a Clean Machine! A/K/A Monthly Chores

1. **Back up any and all data including email, documents, pictures and music files on a regular basis.** Not only should you have a backup system in place, you should make sure you test and confirm your backups monthly. To test, rename a file then attempt to retrieve it from your backups.
2. **Anti-Virus software:** Know what you are using and don't let anything else scan your computer! Don't assume your anti-virus is running okay, check it, and make sure the updates and scans are running routinely.
3. **Run the Check Now Disk Tool.** It checks for potential problems with your hard drive and could prevent a crash from happening. Instructions are here: <http://socsofcc.com/faqs/faq.php?s=1>
4. **Run Defrag.** This utility cleans up your disk drive so that it runs more efficiently.  
<http://socsofcc.com/faqs/faq.php?s=1>
5. **When downloading/installing software you want, make sure that you are not allowing additional options/software to be installed.** They often drain computer resources and slow your computer down. Be very careful for checkboxes that need checking or unchecking. This is typically how you get extra toolbars or software that you don't want.
6. **Clear your browser cache.** This applies to your internet browsing and will often speed it up. From Internet Explorer go to Tools, Internet Options, click on the Delete button and delete your cookies as well temporary internet files.
7. **Run updates for your Microsoft Windows software.** They often contain security patches and fixes. You can go to the Control Panel and click on Windows update in the left hand pane.