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

1. **Stay on top of 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.
2. **Anti-Virus software:** Don't assume its running okay, check it, make sure the updates have been run and that 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. **Don't accept updates or scans from software you don't recognize.** They are often scams that will tell you that an adware or virus has been found and you need to purchase the software to fix it, don't. Please be sure to do chore #2 instead.
7. **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.