



PAF Express
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**Five Steps To Regaining That
New Windows PC Performance**
Kim Komando Radio Show

Even the fastest computers get bogged down over time. Unnecessary files, never-used programs and programs running in the background consume valuable resources. But it takes just five easy steps to reclaim your once zippy Windows machine.

1. Lighten the load. No matter how big your hard drive, it will slow down once it reaches 90 percent capacity. Free up valuable space by removing unused programs. Click Start>>Control Panel (in Windows 98/ME, Start>>Settings>>Control Panel). Doubleclick Add or Remove Programs.

If you have Windows XP, you'll see the size of the program, how often it's used and the date it was last used. It's helpful but shouldn't be used exclusively as a determining factor.

Click the program you want to remove and then click Change/Remove (In Windows 98/ME, Add/Remove).

When uninstalling programs, you may encounter a message asking if you want to remove a shared component. Select "no to all." These files are small and may be necessary for other programs to operate properly.

2. Clean it up. Disk Cleanup will delete downloaded program files, temporary Internet files, items in your Recycle Bin and temporary files. Windows XP's version of Disk Cleanup also deletes offline Web pages and compresses rarely used files.

Click Start>>(All) Programs>>Accessories>>System Tools>>Disk Cleanup. Select the drive you want to clean (probably C:) and click OK. Place a check mark next to the items you want deleted and click OK.

You can also remove Windows components that you don't use. Start Disk Cleanup and click the More Options tab. Click "Clean up" under Windows components. You can remove games, accessories and other nonessential Windows components.

The More Options tab also allows Windows XP users to clear old restore points. These hog space over time. Just click the "Clean up" button under System Restore and then Yes.

3. Reduce the startup. Instant messaging programs, media players and other programs weasel their way into automatically starting with Windows. They just slow down your boot time and guzzle system resources.

You can stop these programs by clicking Start>>Run. Type "msconfig" without the quotes and click

OK. Click the Startup tab.

You'll see a number of programs listed. Some names are easy to figure out. But the majority are difficult to decipher. You can find a list of entries and explanations here:

<http://www.sysinfo.org/startuplist.php>

Clear the boxes for the programs you don't need. Click Apply>>OK. You'll be prompted to restart your computer.

After restarting you'll receive a message stating that the System Configuration Utility is in Diagnostic or Selective Startup mode. Just check the box next to "don't show this message again" and click OK.

4. Consolidate. It's easy to have multiple copies of digital picture files, especially if you find yourself using them for different projects. A good photo organizer will help consolidate all of your pictures and remove duplicates.

There are a number of good organizers under \$50 from Adobe, Nero and Ulead. There's also a program called Picasa (<http://www.picasa.com/picasa/>). It has fewer extras than the others, but it's free.

5. Search. Find and remove inordinately large files through Windows' search function. Click Start>>Search>>All files and folders. Then click on the arrow next to "What size is it?" Click Large>>Search.

You'll probably find forgotten video or music files. You also might find data files from games you no longer play. If you're unsure of the nature of a file, conduct an Internet search using the file name. Computer housekeeping is really a snap. A little diligence will keep your computer clutterfree and speedy.

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