

What to do when the computers are slow

If you notice your computers are running slowly there are a few things you can do to hopefully speed them up.

The first is to scan for viruses and spyware. Malware and spyware can affect how a computer runs and slow it down a good bit. (It also can do things like change your default search engine and homepage, make pop-ups appear, and collect personal information entered on webpages.)

To run a virus scan:

Look for your anti-virus program's icon in the system tray.



In this case it is the green icon with the check mark in it. (You'll see this one if you have Microsoft Security Essentials installed.)

Right click on it.

A dialog box will come up.



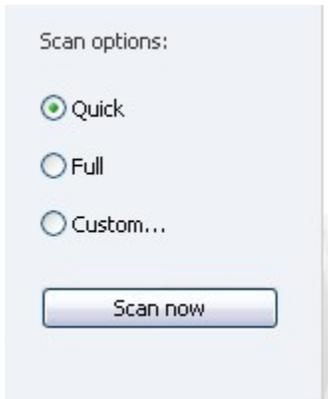
Click on the box that says 'open'. (Other programs may have more choices like running scans or viewing log files.)

If there is an option to run a scan you can click on that.

In Security Essentials the main window will open. If everything is working correctly it should look like this.



Click on the button at the right to start a scan.



Depending on your system the scan should take about a half hour.

To scan for spyware:

Click on the start button and look for 'Malwarebytes Anti-Malware' in the programs list. (There may also be an icon for it on the desktop.)



Open the program.

If a box pops up asking if you want to update the database you should do it.

When the program opens you will see several scan options.



A quick scan should be fine for your purposes.

Click the scan button.

This scan should take about a half hour.
When it's finished a box like this will pop up.



You can also see the results on the program page.



If anything malicious was found there will be instructions on what to do.

The next thing to do is check what programs are installed on the computer.

You will need to be in the administrator account (or admin, or whatever it is called on your computers) to do this.

Go to the start menu.

Click on 'control panel'.

Click on 'add or remove programs'.

A list of all programs installed on the computer will come up.

Scroll down and see if there is anything that wasn't installed by the computer team or your computer administrator.

Things you may want to remove:

Games

Ask toolbar

Bing bar

Google Earth

Yahoo toolbar

IM programs

Media players besides the ones (VLC, Kmpayer) installed by the computer team.

Currently installed programs:

Show updates

Sort by:

Program Name	Size
7-Zip 4.65	3.13MB
Used <u>occasionally</u>	
Last Used On 8/1/2011	
To remove this program from your computer, click Remove.	
<input type="button" value="Remove"/>	
Adobe Flash Player 10 ActiveX	
Adobe Flash Player 10 Plugin	
Apple Application Support	Size 52.67MB
Apple Mobile Device Support	Size 22.07MB
Apple Software Update	Size 2.38MB
Bonjour	Size 1.02MB
Dropbox	Size 26.16MB
FileZilla Client 3.5.1	Size 17.53MB
Foxit Reader	Size 7.17MB
GnuCash 2.2.8	Size 228.00MB
Google Chrome	Size 161.00MB
ImgBurn	Size 3.08MB
iTunes	Size 141.00MB
Jasc Animation Shop 3	Size 15.04MB

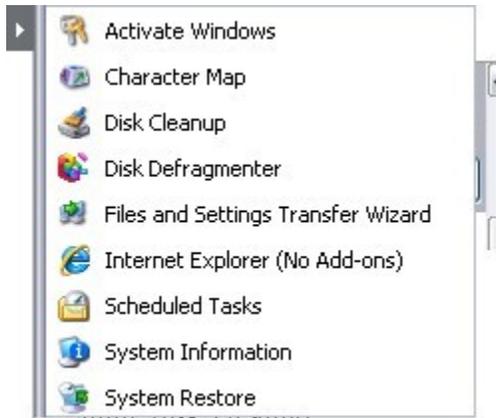
If you see something you want to remove:
Click on it.

Bonjour	Size 1.02MB	<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
Click here for support information.		
Used rarely		
To remove this program from your computer, click Remove.		
<input type="button" value="Remove"/>		
Dropbox	Size 26.16MB	

Click the remove button.
The program will be uninstalled.
Some programs will require a reboot of the computer after uninstallation.

After going through the program list the next thing to try is running 'disk cleanup'.

Click on the start button.
Click on 'all programs'.
Scroll to 'accessories'.
Hover your mouse pointer over 'system tools'.
This box will come up.



Click on disk cleanup.

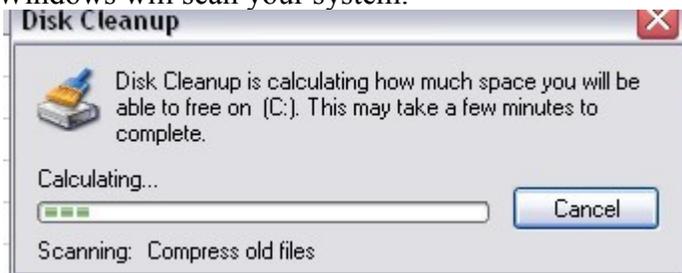


This box will pop up.

Choose the drive you want to clean up. In the majority of cases it will be C.

Click okay.

Windows will scan your system.



When that is complete a box will come up showing everything that is to be deleted or compressed.

Click on any item for more information.

Click on view files to see the files that will be deleted.

If everything looks okay click on ok.



Other things to try:

Run the disk defragmenter. (Get to that the same way you get to disk cleanup.)

It's a good idea to defragment the hard drive at least monthly.

You also may want to do it when:

You add a large number of files.

Your free disk space totals 15 percent or less.

You install new programs or a new version of the Windows operating system.

Run the error checking utility.

Click on the start button.

Click on 'my computer'.

Right click on the C drive.

Click on 'properties'.

In the properties dialog box click on 'tools'.

Click the 'check now' button.

This box will come up.



Be sure the 'scan for and attempt recovery of bad sectors' box is checked.

Click start.

If bad sectors are found choose to fix them.

Check to see what programs are running in the background.

Look at the system tray. (Near the clock.)

There will be icons for programs running in the background on your computer.

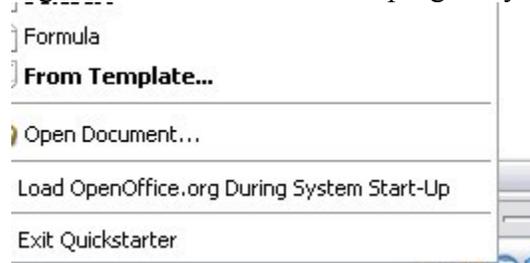


Hover your mouse over them to see what they are for.

If there are programs not currently being used you can close them.

Adobe Reader, Openoffice and Microsoft Office quickstarters, and the Java updater are common ones that run in the background even when those programs aren't being used.

Right click on the icon of the program you want to close.



In this example I'm using Openoffice.

Click on 'exit quickstarter' to close it.

You also can uncheck the box above it to keep it from loading when the computer starts up.

Closing programs will free up system resources and should make the computer run a bit faster.