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1 Quit programs and apps you're not currently using. Running multiple programs and apps at once uses a significant amount of your laptop's memory, causing it to run slowly. Reducing the number of programs and apps you have open may improve your laptop's speed.[1] Look for programs that you've minimized but haven't actually closed. 2 Close unnecessary browser tabs. Each tab in your web browser requires a small amount of memory to run. The more tabs you have open, the more memory your laptop is required to devote to running the web browser. Limiting the number of tabs you have open at a time can enhance the speed of your laptop. After you're finished with a tab, close it. If you are keeping it open as a "reminder" to do something, write yourself a note or send yourself an email instead.[2] Advertisement 3 Restart your laptop. Laptops benefit from regular (~1x/week) restarts. Restarting may significantly improve your laptop's speed.[3] 4 Delete unnecessary programs, apps, and files. Removing programs, apps, and files you no longer use will free up space on your laptop's hard drive.[4] Try looking into your applications folder for old or unused programs to delete or uninstall. Advertisement 1 Click the Apple menu to check for software updates. Select "App Store" from the Apple menu in the top left corner of your screen and check for software updates. Keeping your software up to date helps keep your laptop running fast. 2 Limit the number of programs that open automatically under "System Preferences". Click on the Apple menu in the top left corner of your screen and select "System Preferences". Select "Users and Groups" followed by "Login Items". Check the box next to the each program you no longer want to open automatically at startup and then click "-" to delete the items from the list. Preventing programs and apps from opening automatically at startup is another great way to increase your laptop's speed.[5] 3 End unnecessary background processes with the "Activity Monitor". Your laptop runs a variety of programs in the background. These background processes can monopolize your laptop's memory, causing it to run slowly. Ending the background processes will improve the speed of your laptop. Open the "Applications" folder, then launch "Utilities". Open "Activity Monitor", click on the "Memory" tab, then the "Memory" filter. Double-click on a program you want to quit and then click "Quit". To end the program, click "Quit" again.[6] Only close programs that you are familiar with. The memory filter will only show the programs by the amount of memory they are using. The program using the most memory will appear at the top of the list. 4 Disable your laptop's visual effects through the "System Preferences". Visual effects, such as the way your laptop minimizes windows, can also slow down your laptop. To turn these off, click on the Apple menu in the top left corner of your screen and select "System Preferences". Select "Dock". Change the "Minimize windows using" preference from "Genie effect" to "Scale effect". Return to "System Preferences" main menu and open "Accessibility". Check the box next to "Reduce transparency". This will decrease the transparency of drop-down menus, the dock, etc.[7] Advertisement 1 Check for updates. Windows releases updates on the second Tuesday of each month. Updating your laptop regularly will fix bugs, allowing your laptop to run smoother and faster. Select "Start", followed by "Settings". Click "Update and Security". Select "Windows Update", then "Check for Updates". Windows will automatically download all available updates.[8] 2 Limit the number of programs that open at startup with the "Task Manager". When you turn on your computer, some programs and applications launch automatically. You can improve your laptop's startup performance by decreasing the number of programs and apps that open automatically. Right-click in the lower right corner of your screen and select "Task Manager" to open. Click "More Details". Open the "Startup" tab. Right-click on a program or app and select "Disable". This will not delete the program. It will only prevent the program or app from launching when you turn on your computer.[9] 3 Run a Performance Report. Windows 10's Performance Monitor tool provides users with a comprehensive report about their laptop. The report identifies problems and suggests fixes. Click "Start" then type "perform / report" in the search box. Hit ↵ Enter. This will launch the Performance Monitor. It will take the program a few minutes to compile a report. Read through the report and fix problems. Take time to peruse the report. Follow the instructions to fix any issues it identifies.[10] 4 Turn off background apps. In addition to the programs you can see, your laptop also runs a variety of programs in the background. These background processes continue to use memory even when you're not using them. Turn off these programs can help speed up your laptop. Select "Settings", then "Settings". Click "Privacy" and select "Background Apps". Identify the apps you don't want to run and slide the toggle switch to "off". If you want to use these programs, you can open them manually.[11] 5 Defragment your hard drive. Overtime, the files stored on your hard drive become fragmented—instead of storing all of a file's components together, the parts are stored in non-contiguous clusters. When you open a fragmented file, the hard drive must search for all of the parts, which can reduce the speed of your computer. Your hard drive is automatically defragmented on a set schedule. However, you can also manually defragment your hard drive.[12] 11 Click the Start button and type "Defragment and Optimize Drives" in the search bar. Launch the tool. Select your hard drive and hit "Analyze". Select "Optimize" to defragment your hard drive. Do not use your computer while the hard drive is being defragmented.[13] 6 Clean your disks. Running Windows' Disk Cleaner tool allows users to easily find and remove unnecessary files, programs, and apps from their disks. Removing these files will free up more memory, allowing your computer to run faster. Click the Start button and type "Disk cleanup" in the search bar. Launch the program from the results list. Select the drive you want to clean. Check the boxes next to the types of files you would like to delete. You can read a brief description of the file type by clicking on the item. Click "Ok" to clean up your disks.[14] 7 Disable visual effects. Windows 10 comes with a variety of animations that are enabled by default. Disabling these animations can improve the speed of your laptop. Press ⌘ Win+R to open the run command. Type "sysdm.cpl" in the command prompt and press ↵ Enter. Select the "Advanced" tab. Under "Performance," select "Settings" then "Custom". Uncheck the boxes next to each animation option and click "Apply".[15] Advertisement 1 Check for updates. Updating the operating system, programs, and apps can significantly improve the speed of your laptop. To check for updates: Swipe from the right side of the screen towards the center and select "Settings". Click "Change PC settings" and select "Update and recovery". Choose "Check for updates". Click "Install Updates", accept the terms, and click "Finish".[16] 2 Limit the number of programs that open upon startup. When you start your computer, a few programs and applications launch automatically. If the laptop has to launch too many programs and apps at once, it will be slow to boot up. You can improve your laptop's startup performance by disabling programs and apps that are set to open automatically. Click "Start" then select "Task Manager" to open. Click the "Startup" tab and select the program you want to disable. Click "Disable". 3 End unnecessary background processes. When there are many programs running in the background, your laptop's ability to execute simple tasks is greatly reduced. Closing these programs with the Task Manager will improve the speed of your laptop. Right-click on the desktop taskbar and select "Task Manager" from the pop-up menu. Click on the "Processes" tab to view the results. Select tasks that are using a lot of your computer's resources (these are highlighted) and/or tasks that are running in the background (found under "Background Processes"). Only select programs that you are familiar with. Click "End Task". 4 Defragment your hard drive. As you use and move files around, the files stored on your hard drive become fragmented—instead of storing all of a file's components together, the parts are stored in noncontiguous clusters. As a result, it can take your laptop a while to open a fragmented file. While your hard drive is automatically defragmented on a set schedule, you can also manually defragment your hard drive.[18] Click the Start button and type "Defragment" in the search box. Select "Disk Defragmenter" from the results. Select a drive and click "Analyze disk". Click "Defragment disk". 5 Clean up your disks. Windows' Disk Cleaner tool allows users to easily find and remove unnecessary files, programs, and apps from their disks. Removing these files will free up more memory, allowing your computer to run faster. Swipe from the right of your screen towards the center and select "Settings". Click "Control Panel" and select "Administrative Tools". Double-click "Disk Cleanup", then select the drive you want to clean and click "Ok". Check the boxes next to the types of files you would like to remove and click "Ok". Select "Delete Files".[19] 6 Disable visual effects. Windows 10 comes with several animations that are enabled by default. Disabling these animations can improve the speed of your laptop. Press ⌘ Win+R to open the run command. Type "sysdm.cpl" in the command prompt and press ↵ Enter. Select the "Advanced" tab. Under "Performance," select "Settings" then "Custom". Uncheck the boxes next to each animation option and click "Apply".[15] Advertisement 1 Check for updates. Updating the operating system, programs, and apps can significantly improve the speed of your laptop. To check for updates: Swipe from the right side of the screen towards the center and select "Settings". Click "Change PC settings" and select "Update and recovery". Choose "Check for updates". 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Stan Kats Professional Technologist Stan Kats is a Professional Technologist and the COO and Chief Technologist for The STG IT Consulting Group in West Hollywood, California. Stan provides comprehensive technology solutions to businesses through managed IT services, and for individuals through his consumer service business, Stan's Tech Garage. Stan holds a BA in International Relations from The University of Southern California. He began his career working in the Fortune 500 IT world. Stan founded his companies to offer an enterprise-level of expertise for small businesses and individuals. Make sure you have your firewall turned on so it can prevent access to your devices. Also make sure to avoid signing onto anyone else's WiFi network and stay off public Wi-Fi networks. Make sure your home WiFi network has a strong password that isn't easy to guess, and don't give it out to people—they might feel really "generous" and share it with others. Make sure your router is sufficiently up to date and protects you from any bugs or viruses that make computers vulnerable. Finally, keep your operating system patched and up to date. Question How do I update my Nvidia drivers? I want the best experience when I play video games on my laptop. Stan Kats Professional Technologist Stan Kats is a Professional Technologist and the COO and Chief Technologist for The STG IT Consulting Group in West Hollywood, California. Stan provides comprehensive technology solutions to businesses through managed IT services, and for individuals through his consumer service business, Stan's Tech Garage. Stan holds a BA in International Relations from The University of Southern California. He began his career working in the Fortune 500 IT world. Stan founded his companies to offer an enterprise-level of expertise for small businesses and individuals. Windows updates will typically keep those drivers up to date. You can also go to Nvidia's website: go to the "Downloads" areas and identify which card you have—once you find it, click on it and install the latest drivers. Nvidia also has an optional service called the "GeForce Experience." It will automatically notify you when the latest drivers are released so you can download them ASAP. Question How does filling up my hard disk slow down my laptop? Because it has to load up everything you have on there every time you use it, so the more you have on there, the longer it will take. See more answers Ask a Question Advertisement Thanks Advertisement Thanks Advertisement Thanks for reading our article! If you'd like to learn more about Computer Networking, check out our in-depth interview with Stan Kats. Co-authored by: Professional Technologist This article was co-authored by Stan Kats. Stan Kats is a Professional Technologist and the COO and Chief Technologist for The STG IT Consulting Group in West Hollywood, California. Stan provides comprehensive technology solutions to businesses through managed IT services, and for individuals through his consumer service business, Stan's Tech Garage. Stan holds a BA in International Relations from The University of Southern California. He began his career working in the Fortune 500 IT world. Stan founded his companies to offer an enterprise-level of expertise for small businesses and individuals. This article has been viewed 1,691,167 times. Co-authors: 44 Updated: March 10, 2025 Views: 1,691,167 Categories: Laptop Maintenance and Repair Print Send fan mail to authors Thanks to all authors for creating a page that has been read 1,691,167 times. "I like your simple, yet very useful, tips on how to make a laptop work faster. Thanks a lot for sharing your ideas. It has a lot of ways to make a difficult task easy to do, not only on computer but for other possible queries. Thank you..." "... more Share your story This wikiHow teaches you how to improve your laptop's operation speed, whether it's running Windows, macOS, or Chrome OS (Chromebooks). Laptops most often slow down due to insufficient storage, memory-draining display effects, excessive cached files, and poor care. 1 Practice good computer habits. You may be surprised at how adjusting a few of your computer-use habits can quickly turn a sluggish laptop into a functionally superior one: Empty the Recycle Bin often. Close programs when you're done using them. Turn off your computer at least once every few days. Install updates when they become available. Don't install programs that are too hefty for your computer to handle. Never install more than one antivirus program at a time (on Windows, you don't need to install an antivirus program—Windows Defender comes pre-installed). Keep your computer's air vents clean and unobstructed. 2 Change your battery settings. Most Windows computers are balanced between battery conservation and performance, but you can set your computer to emphasize performance. Keep in mind that doing this will significantly reduce your laptop's battery life. Click the Start icon Click the Settings icon Click System Click the Battery tab on the left side of the page. Uncheck the "Turn battery saver on automatically" box. Avoid turning on Battery Saver in the future. 3 Remove unnecessary programs. Any unnecessary program that you have installed just takes up space and memory. You can uninstall excess programs by doing the following: Click the Start icon Type in control panel Click Control Panel at the top of the Start menu. Click the Uninstall a program link (or click Programs and Features if you see a list of icons on this page). Find a program that you want to remove, then click it to select it. Click Uninstall or Uninstall/Change Follow any on-screen prompts until the program is uninstalled. If prompted to restart your computer, select the Later option. Repeat this process for any other unneeded programs. 4 Prevent programs from starting when you turn on your computer. When turning back on a Windows computer, you'll notice that several programs usually attempt to start all at once. This can slow down significantly your computer's load time. To prevent programs from starting up automatically when you turn on your computer, do the following: Click the Start icon Type in task manager Click Task Manager at the top of the Start window. Click the Startup tab. Click a program's name. Click Disable in the lower-right corner of the window. Repeat for every other program in this window. 5 Turn off special display effects. Windows 10 has several display enhancements (such as shadows and dynamic lighting effects) that can cause significant slow-down on older or lower-end PCs. Fortunately, you can disable these effects for smoother operation: Click the Start icon . Type in advanced system settings Click View advanced system settings at the top of the Start menu. Click the Advanced tab. Click Enhancements... below the "Performance" heading. Click the Visual Effects tab. Check the "Custom" box. Uncheck every box on this page. Click Apply, then click OK 6 Run the Disk Cleanup program. Disk Cleanup is a program that finds temporary files, folders, and other items which can safely be deleted and then deletes them for you. This is a handy way to delete a few gigabytes' worth of useless data from your computer. Click Start Type in disk cleanup Click Disk Cleanup at the top of the Start menu. Click Clean up system files in the lower-left side of the window. Wait for Disk Cleanup to find files to remove. Check every box in the main window, scrolling down as needed. Click OK Click Delete Files when prompted. 7 Scan for viruses. Viruses can slow down your computer and prevent you from using certain programs. By scanning with the built-in Windows Defender antivirus program, you can identify and remove viruses on your computer. Do not download and/or use a different antivirus program on your computer. 8 Restart your computer. Click Start , click Power , and click Restart in the resulting menu. Once your computer finishes restarting, your changes should be completely implemented. It's normal for your computer to behave sluggishly for the first few minutes after you start it up. 1 Practice good computer habits. You may be surprised at how adjusting a few of your computer-use habits can quickly turn a sluggish laptop into a functionally superior one: Empty the Trash Can often. Close programs when you're done using them. Turn off your computer at least once every few days. Install updates when they become available. Don't install programs that are too hefty for your computer to handle. Never install more than one antivirus program at a time (on a Mac, you should stick to Malwarebytes). Keep your computer's air vents clean and unobstructed. 2 Delete or move desktop files. Macs are somewhat notorious for being sensitive to over-cluttered desktops, but you can easily rectify this problem by deleting or moving the files from your desktop. Delete - Select files to delete, click the Edit menu item, and click the Delete option in the resulting drop-down menu. Move - Select files to move, press ⌘ Command+X, open the folder into which you want to move the files, and press ⌘ Command+V. 3 Remove unnecessary programs. As with any computer, unused programs on your Mac take up a large amount of space regardless of whether you can actively use or remove them. You can remove unnecessary programs from your Mac by doing the following: Click the desktop or open a Finder window to open a Finder window. Click Applications Find an application that you don't need. Drag the application to the Trash Can in your Mac's dock. Follow any on-screen prompts to uninstall the program. Repeat this process for any other unused programs. 4 Turn off startup programs. Startup programs are applications which attempt to start when you boot up your Mac. This can cause significant slow-down and even crashes, so disabling startup programs is highly recommended. Open the Apple menu Click System Preferences... Click Users & Groups Click the Login Items tab. Select a program. Click - below the programs window. Repeat this process for all other programs in this window. 5 Disable the Dashboard feature. The Dashboard is a screen that displays various widgets and open windows. While potentially useful, the Dashboard consumes a large amount of memory; luckily, it can easily be disabled: Open the Apple menu You can also click : : : and skip the next step if System Preferences is already open. Click System Preferences... Click Mission Control Click the "Dashboard" drop-down box. Click Off in the resulting drop-down menu. 6 Optimize your Mac's hard drive storage. Mac OS Sierra and above include a feature that allows you to remove unnecessary files and data from your Mac, including watched TV show episodes (these can be re-downloaded later):[1] Open the Apple menu . Click About This Mac Click the Storage tab. Click Manage... in the upper-right side of the window. Click Optimize... to the right of the "Optimize Storage" heading. 7 Run a Disk Utility First Aid scan on your computer. This will check your Mac's hard drive for minor errors (and repair them if necessary), which can improve your Mac's file recovery speed and overall performance: Click Go in the menu bar. You may first have to click the desktop or open a Finder window before Go will appear. Click Utilities Double-click the "Disk Utility" icon. Select your Mac's hard drive in the upper-left side of the window. Click the First Aid tab. Click Run when prompted, then click Continue if prompted. 8 Scan for viruses. Viruses can slow down your computer and prevent you from using certain programs. By downloading and scanning with Malwarebytes Antivirus, you can identify and remove viruses on your Mac. Never have more than one antivirus installed at one time. 9 Restart your Mac. Click the Apple menu icon , click Restart... in the resulting drop-down menu, and click Restart Now when prompted. Once your Mac finishes restarting, it should be running much faster. 10 Turn off startup programs. Startup programs are applications which attempt to start when you boot up your Mac. This can cause significant slow-down and even crashes, so disabling startup programs is highly recommended. Open the Apple menu Click System Preferences... Click Users & Groups Click the Login Items tab. Select a program. Click - below the programs window. Repeat this process for all other programs in this window. 5 Disable the Dashboard feature. The Dashboard is a screen that displays various widgets and open windows. 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