PC AND MAC
TO THE
MAX

Essential PC & Mac Speedup Guide

from *WebMinds*

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Foreword

Having to struggle with a slow computer is one of the most frustrating things you have to deal with every day. Some people get so annoyed by their slow computers that they punch them, smash them and sometimes even throw laptops out of the window. But there's no need for such drastic measures because pretty much any PC or Mac can be sped up.

The thing is, if your computer is slow, it's probably your own fault because you didn't do proper PC or Mac maintenance on time. Remember how fast your computer was when you first got it? A bit of maintenance and optimization will make it fast again in no time. In this guide, we'll show you how to speed up and optimize any PC or Mac in a quick and easy way. We'll provide easy to follow instructions for regular computer maintenance. So, let's get started!

Step 1: Back Up Your Data

Before you start tweaking your PC or Mac, it's a good idea to back up your files and your operating system. Actually, it's a good idea to create regular backups anyway, just in case something goes wrong.

The easiest way to back up your files is to copy them to an external hard drive, but that doesn't back up your operating system and software. That's why we recommend that you back up by creating a disk image. It's easy enough and it backs up all your settings, customizations, software, etc.

On Windows:

If you're on Windows 8.1 or Windows 10, you'll need to do a Start Screen or a Start Menu search for **"file history"** because that's where Microsoft moved system image backups. If you're still on Windows 7, simply click on **Start →
Getting Started** and select **"Back up your files"**. Then click on **"System Image Backup"** link on Windows 8.1 or 10, or on **"Create a system image"** link in Windows 7.

The next step is to decide where you want to save the image. An external hard drive is a good place because it has enough space for everything. You can also save the image on multiple DVDs and store it in a network location.
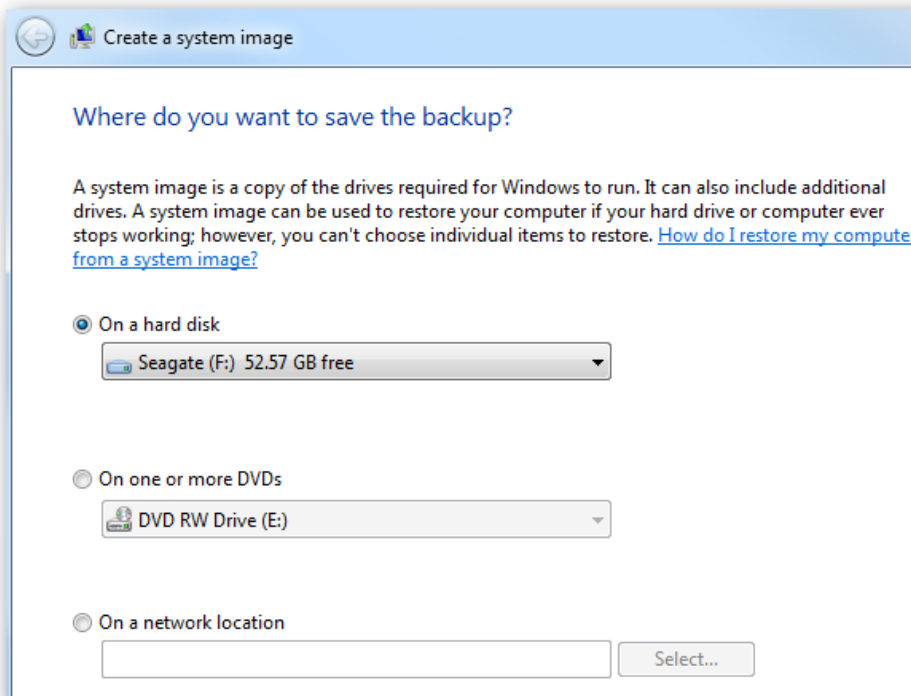
Select the drive you want to use and then follow the prompts to create the back up. At one point, you'll be offered to create a system repair disc, which you should do if you want to be able to easily restore your OS.

On a Mac:

Apple computers have an amazing feature called Time Machine that backs up everything to an external hard drive or Time Capsule automatically. It also lets you restore a backup or roll back your OS quickly and easily.

To back up your Mac using Time Machine, insert an external hard drive using a USB port. Most likely, Time Machine will ask you if you want to use the drive for backups. If it does, simply follow the prompts. If it doesn't, click on the Time Machine icon in the menu bar ⏱ and click on **Select Backup Disk**.
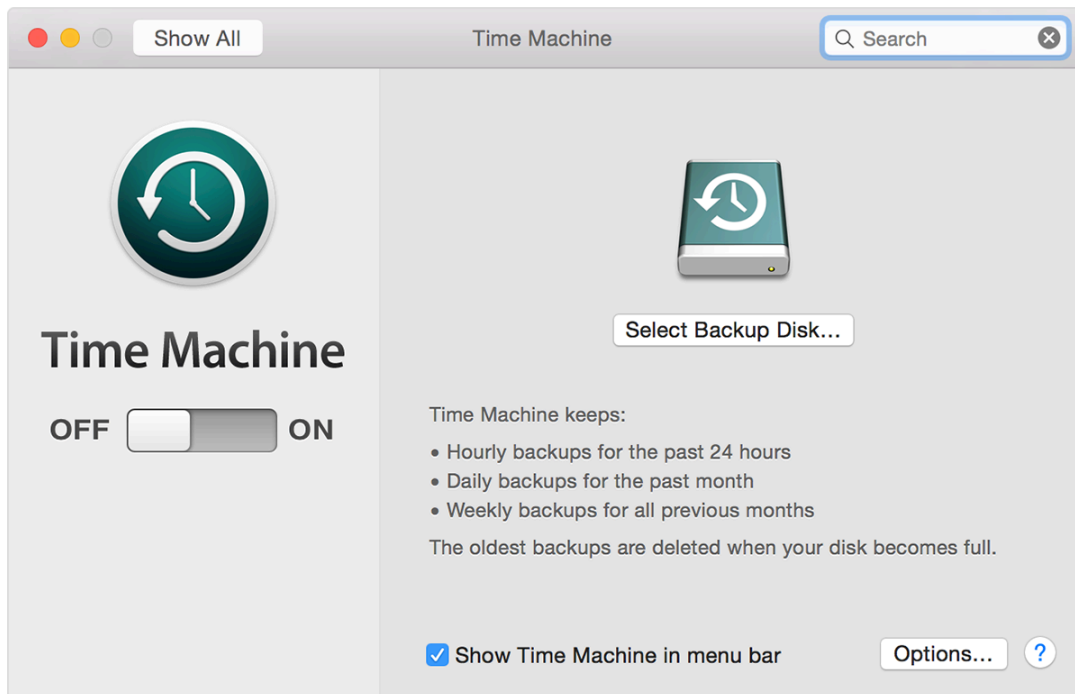
Then simply follow the prompts.

When you finish setting up Time Machine, it will automatically make hourly backups for the past 24 hours, daily backups for the past month, and weekly backups for all previous months. It will delete the oldest backups when your backup drive gets filled up.

If you don't want to wait for the next automatic backup, click on the Time Machine menu bar icon ⏱ and select **Back Up Now**.

Step 2: Get Rid of Digital Junk

Now that your computer is backed up, it's time to do some serious cleaning. No, you don't need to grab a cloth and start wiping your computer (although that probably is a good idea too). We'll delete some digital junk that's not only making your computer slow, but also takes up gigabytes of valuable disk space. And no, you don't need to frantically delete files and risk losing something important because there are plenty of useless hidden files we need to get rid of.

Typical digital junk to delete is:

- Browser cache, Temporary Internet Files, system and app caches, and history files
- Files from your Recycle Bin or Trash
- Duplicate files
- Unused software

Deleting all these is easy enough on both Windows and Mac.

**Delete Temporary Files to Free Up Space**

When you use your computer for pretty much anything, it creates lots of temporary files. Unfortunately, it forgets to delete those files when they're not needed anymore. For example, browsers create tons of temporary files that are supposed to speed up your browsing by caching images and other stuff, but when all these files accumulate and start taking up too much disk space, they start slowing things down. That's why you should delete browser cache and other temporary files on a regular basis. Say, once a week.

On Windows:

You can delete temporary files directly from your browser by going to Settings - History (or whatever your browser calls it), but it's better to use the built-in **Disk Cleanup Utility** because it finds more junk and deletes it in just a couple of clicks.

To open the Disk Cleanup Utility, simply search for **Disk Cleanup** or open **Computer**, right-click on the drive you want to clean, select **Properties** and click on the **Disk Cleanup** button on the **General** tab. Then use the checkboxes to select which files you want to delete.

If you've recently upgraded to Windows 10, you can free up tons of space by deleting Windows installation files you don't need anymore.
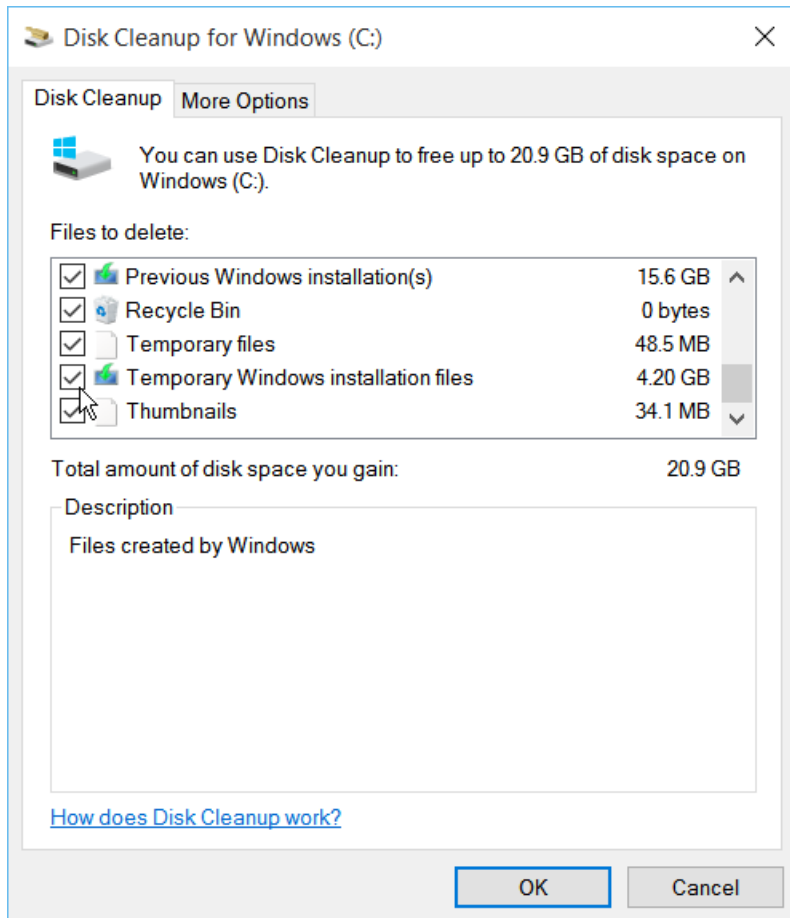
While you're at it, don't forget to go to the **More Options** tab and delete outdated system restore points. They take up loads of space and are completely useless (Windows will still keep the latest restore point in case you need it).

On a Mac:

Deleting temporary files on a Mac is not as straightforward if you're doing it manually, but still manageable:

1. Open **Finder** and go to **Finder menu**
2. Select **Go** and then click on **Go to Folder…**
3. In the dialog box that appears enter **~/Library/Caches**
4. Just in case, make a backup of this folder. Just copy it and paste it on your desktop to keep safe. You can delete it from there later.
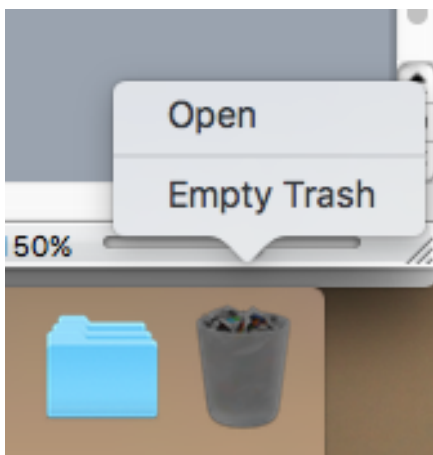
5. Now select all files in the Caches folder - press CMD+A to do that
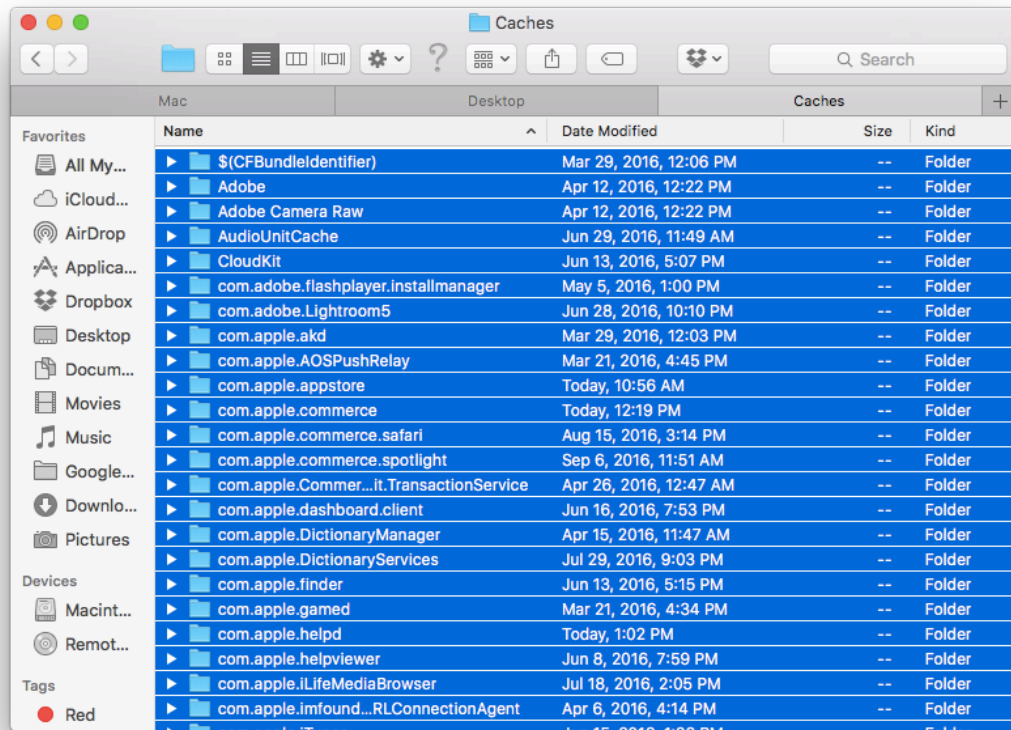
6. Delete all these files
7. Repeat the process for **/Library/Caches** and **~/Library/Logs** folders

Now that all unneeded logs and caches are in the Trash, you should empty your Trash Can to free up space. That's easy enough - right-click on the **Trash Can** (a two-finger click on a Macbook) and select **Empty Trash**.

Find and Delete Duplicate Files

Now that we're done with invisible junk, it's time to manage something less obvious, but equally space hungry - duplicate files. We all have them on our computers, but most of the time we can't be bothered to manage them. But just think of it - you have dozens of files scattered all over your drive that take up room, confuse you because you can't always tell which copy is the one you need, and make things like scans and backups slower. So, let's get rid of them!

In theory, you could try to sniff out the duplicates and delete them manually, but that would take lots of time and effort. Plus it's not a very reliable method because files with the same name could have different content. That's why we recommend that you use a duplicate finder.

There are lots of duplicate finder apps to choose from, but if you're looking for software that has both a Windows and a Mac version, check out Easy Duplicate Finder. It's really advanced, has different scan modes for all types of duplicates and is very easy to use.

To delete duplicates with this program, just drag and drop folders to the scan area, click on the **Start Scan** button and wait for the program to scan your disk for duplicates. And don't worry about your system files – Easy Duplicate Finder won't go anywhere near them.
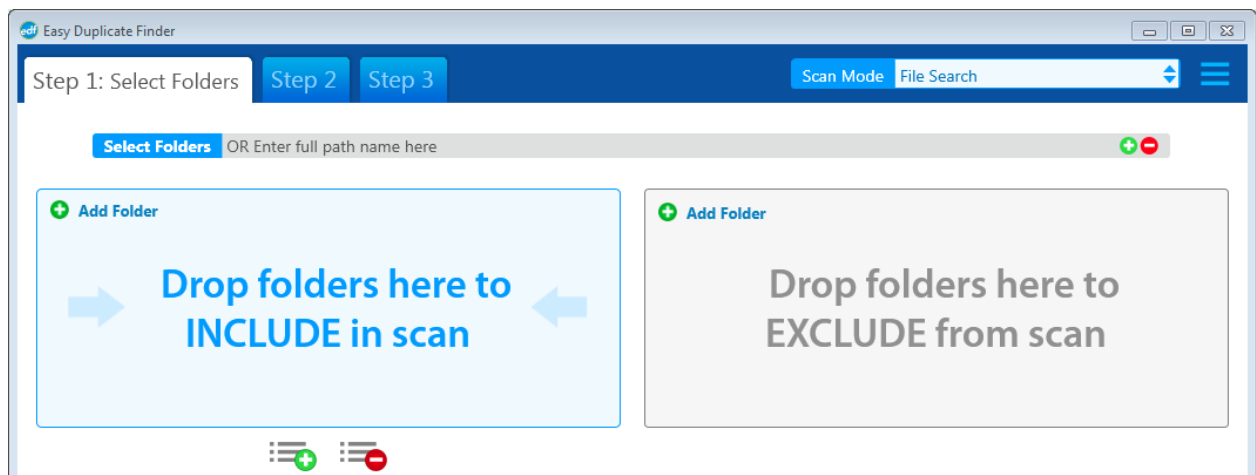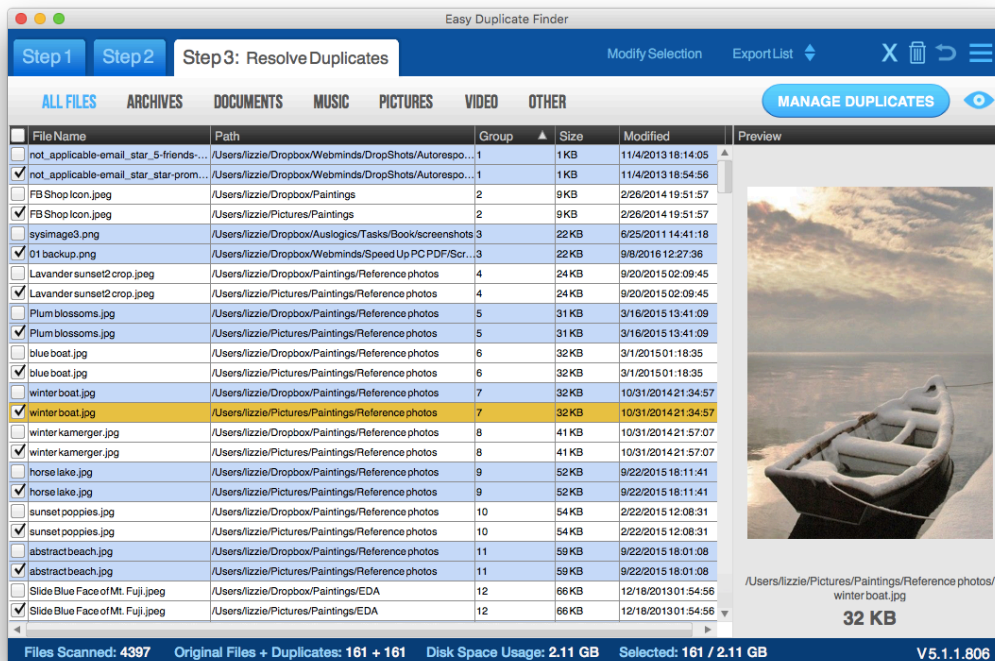
You can track the progress of the scan using Easy Duplicate Finder's intuitive progress wheel:

When the scan is finished, you can remove the duplicates automatically using the **Remove All Now** link.
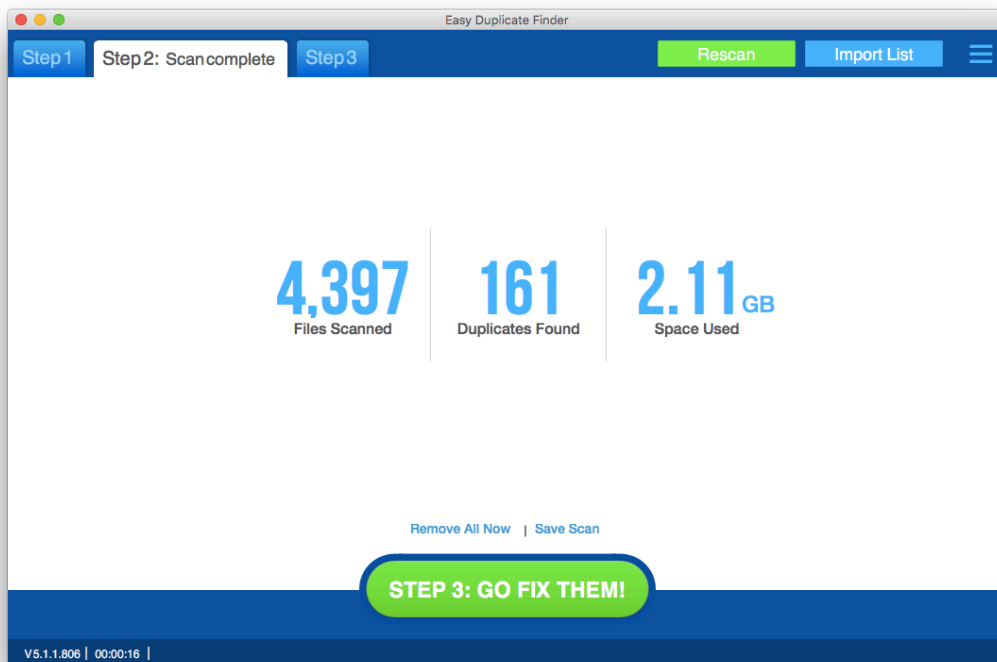
Or you can proceed to **Step 3** and review the scan results:

There are lots of file management options that will help you get rid of duplicate files in one click - just click on the **Manage Duplicates** button and select the option you want.

Uninstall Unused Software

Now that we got rid of the files you don't need, it's time to have a look at your software. Chances are that there are several apps installed on your PC or Mac that you never use. Not only do these apps take up disk space, but they may also be running in the background and using up system resources.

On Windows:

1. Click on the **Start** button, select **Control Panel**, click **Programs**, and then select **Programs and Features**
2. There select a program you want to uninstall and click **Uninstall**

You may be prompted for an administrator password or UAC confirmation when you uninstall some programs.

On a Mac:

Uninstalling apps on a Mac is a lot easier than that - just open **Finder**, go to your **Applications** folder and drag the apps you want to delete to **Trash**. Some

apps may ask for your admin password. When the application is in your Trash Can, empty Trash and that's it.

NOTE: When you uninstall Mac apps that way, some junk gets left behind. You could remove it from Terminal if you're an advanced user, but if you're not, your best bet is to leave those remnants alone.

# Step 3: Control Software that Runs on Startup

Do you remember how quickly your PC or Mac used to start when it was new? But it didn't take long for it to slow down. That's because a lot of apps add themselves to your startup list (or **Login Items** on Mac) and load every time you launch your computer. Since these items load themselves in your computer's memory, your PC or Mac needs longer to start functioning.

Opening programs you need manually is no big deal, so you really should disable unneeded startup items.
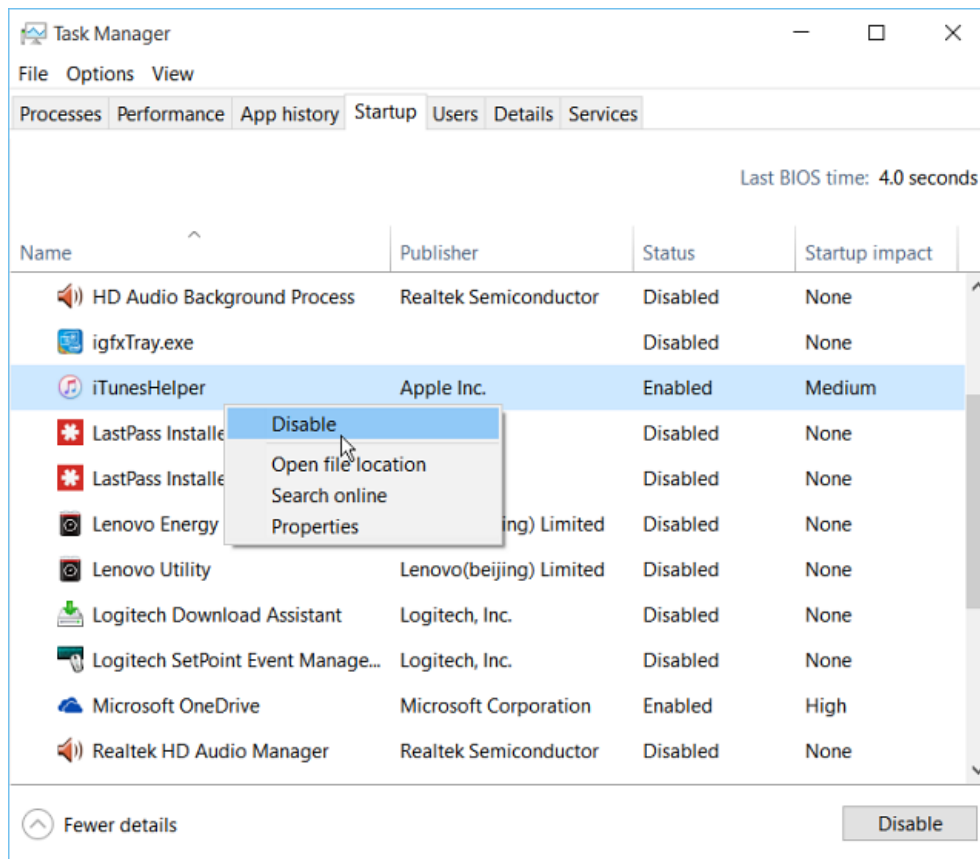
On Windows:

If you're on a newer version of Windows, then you're lucky because the Task Manager now makes it easy to control your startup items.

1. Right-click in the taskbar and select **Task Manager**
2. Click on the **More Details** arrow to get the complete view of your apps
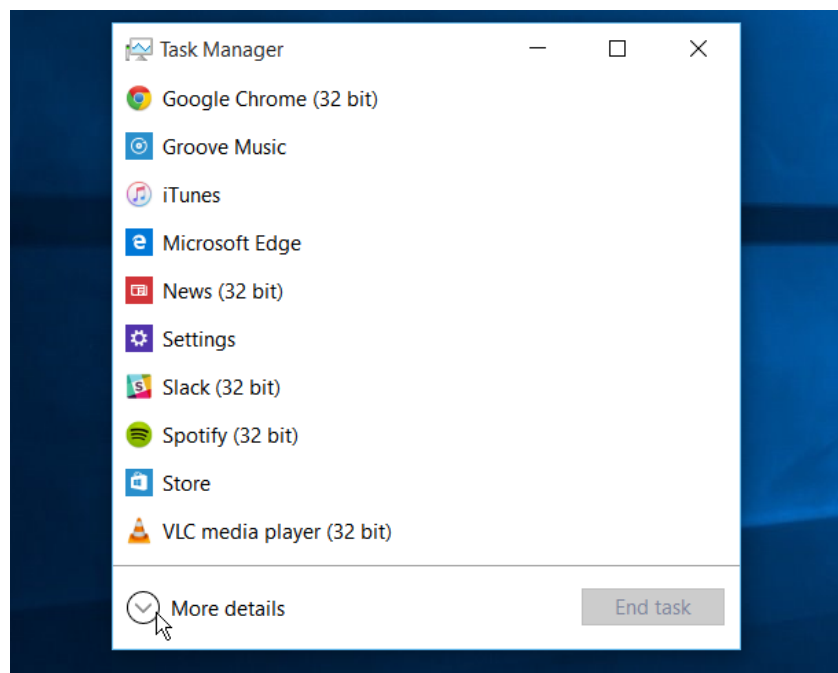
3. Now go to the **Startup tab** and sort your apps by **Startup impact**. You'll immediately see which apps are slowing you down and how much.
4. Disable unneeded startup apps by right-clicking on them and selecting **Disable**

If you're on Windows 7, then managing startup items is a bit more difficult. You either have to use a third party utility or use **MSCONFIG**:

1. Click on the **Start** button, then click **Search Programs and Files**
2. Type **msconfig** in the box and hit **Enter**. This will launch the **System Configuration Utility**.
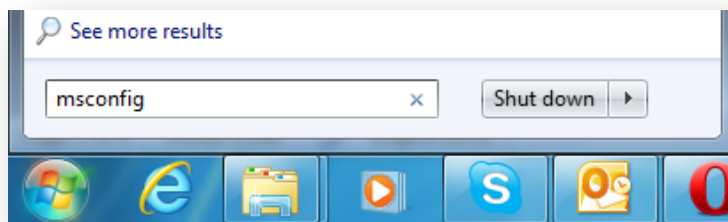
3. Go to the **Startup** tab and browse the list of programs launching on system boot
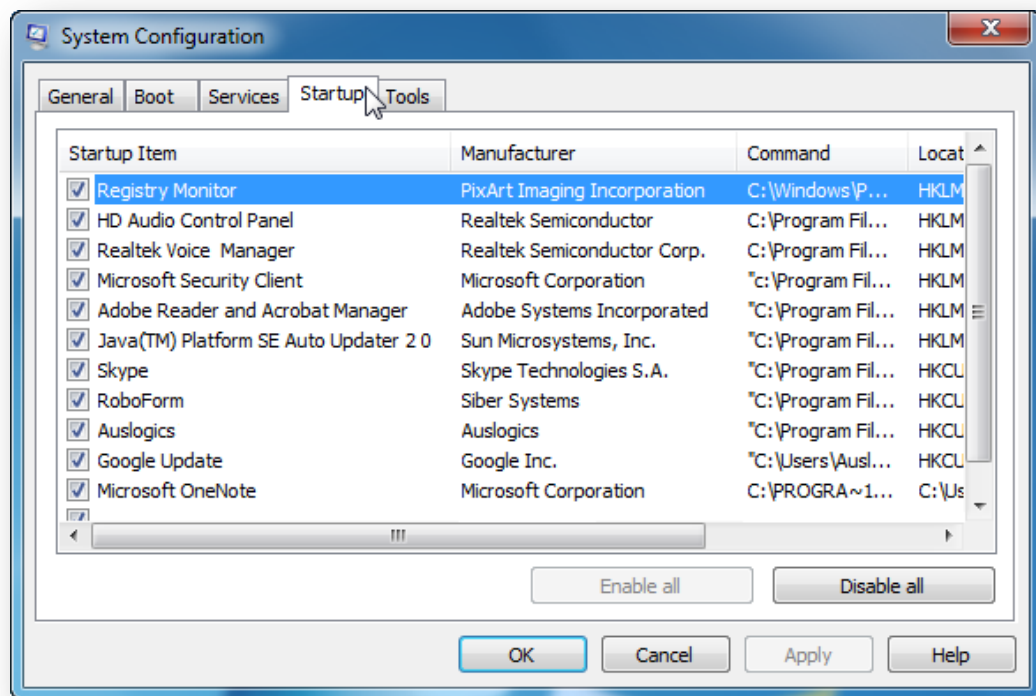

4. Uncheck the programs you don't want to start automatically on system startup. Be careful with your choices because there's always a chance that you could disable something important.
5. When done, click **Apply** and then click **OK**

On a Mac:

Cleaning up startup items on a Mac is very easy:

1. Go to **System Preferences** by either clicking on the dock icon or the Apple icon in the menu bar
2. Select **Users & Groups** and click on your user name

3. Click on **Login Items**
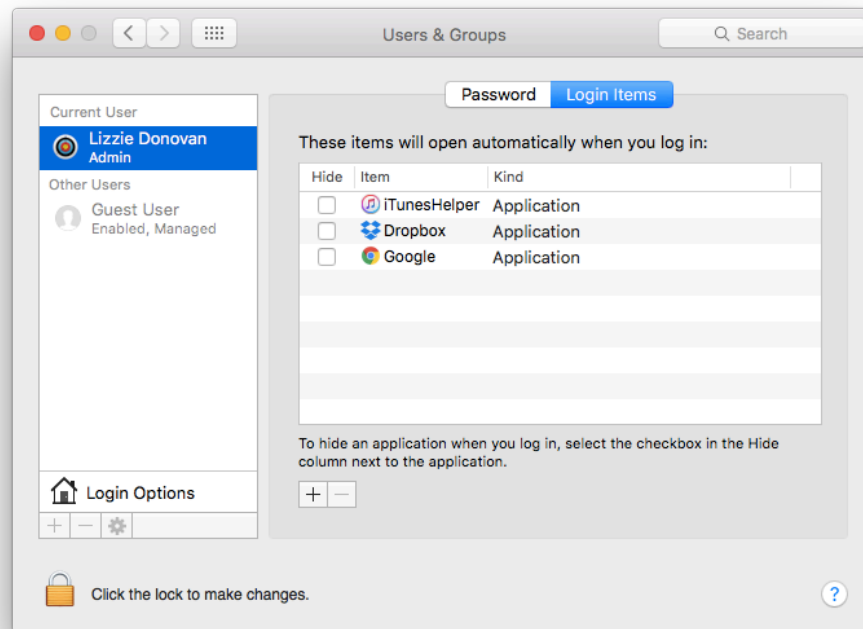
4. Now click on the lock sign if it's locked to be able to make changes and then simply delete the login items you don't need.

Step 5: Clean Up Your Desktop

Do you have lots of files dumped on your desktop? Opening files from the desktop may seem convenient if you have a handful of them there, but if your desktop is cluttered by dozens of files and icons, things become difficult to find. But that's not all.

Did you know that the more files you have on your desktop, the slower your PC or Mac will be? That's because these files load in the memory every time you turn on your computer or wake it up from sleep. Moving files away from the desktop can give you an amazing performance boost, especially if you're on a Mac.

It's up to you how and where to move files from your desktop. Most of the files I have on my desktop are downloads and screenshots, which means that most of them are safe to delete.
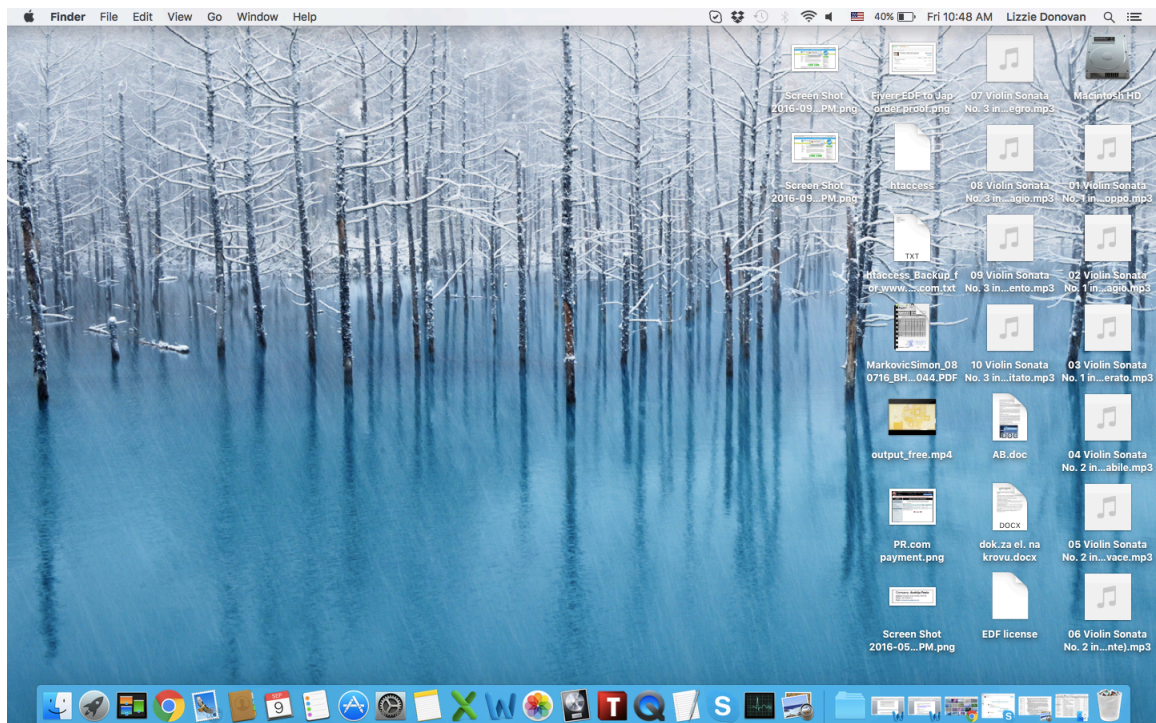

Once your desktop is organized, try to keep it that way and avoid dumping files there. If you really have to save files to your desktop, create a folder there and put the files in that folder. This way your PC or Mac will not load all those individual files, but will load the folder instead (that makes things a lot faster).

Step 6: Find Resource-Hungry Processes

If your computer is still slow after following the steps above, you should find out what exactly is slowing it down. There might be a rogue app or system process that's taking up all CPU or RAM resources.

On Windows:

1. Open the **Task Manager** by pressing **Ctrl+Shift+Esc**
2. Make sure to click on **Show processes from all users** if applicable. If you're on Windows 10, click on the **More Details** arrow
3. Go to the **Processes** tab
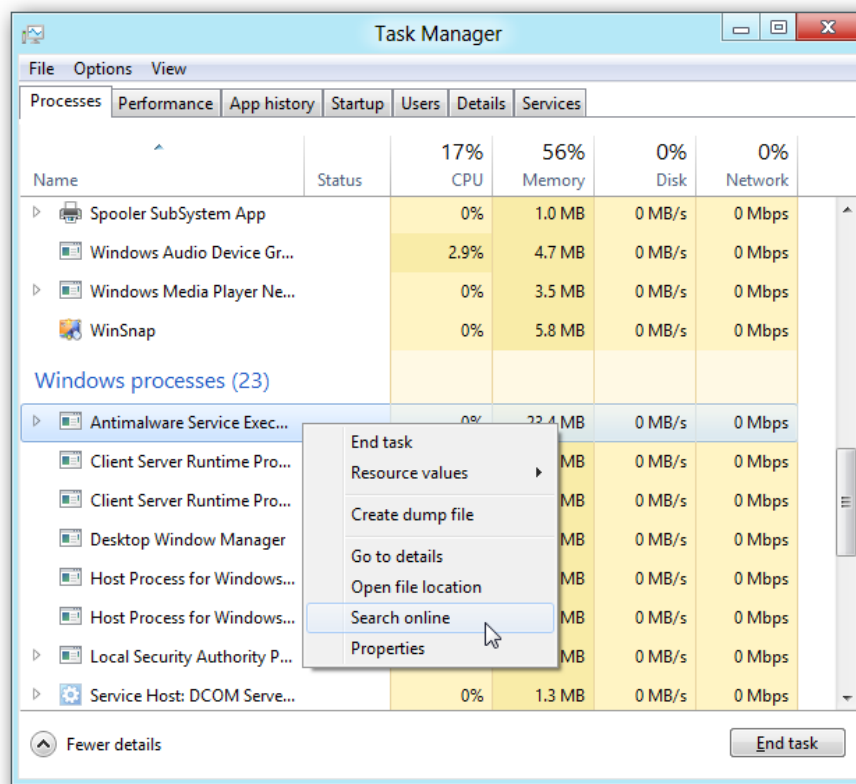
4. Sort running processes by CPU and see if there are any processes taking up an unusual amount of CPU resources (like 80-95%)
5. Now sort running processes by Memory and see if there's a process taking up too much RAM. Firefox and Chrome are often the guilty ones.
6. Try restarting your PC and come back to the Task Manager to see if the rogue process is fixed. Rebooting often fixes hanging apps and applies the necessary updates that were running in the background.

IMPORTANT: Don't start deleting and disabling processes randomly! If you see a process taking up too much system resources, right-click on it, select **Search online** and find out if it's safe to disable or not before you do anything else.

On a Mac:

1. Press **Command+Space** to open **Spotlight search**, type **Activity Monitor**, and then press **Enter**.
2. The Activity Monitor app will open and you'll see your running processes there
3. Click the **CPU** tab, then click on "% CPU" to sort processes by CPU usage and see which processes take up the most.
4. If you see an app using 90-99% of CPU, try closing it the usual way. If that doesn't help, force-quit it by clicking on its process in the Activity Monitor and clicking on the **X** button in the toolbar.
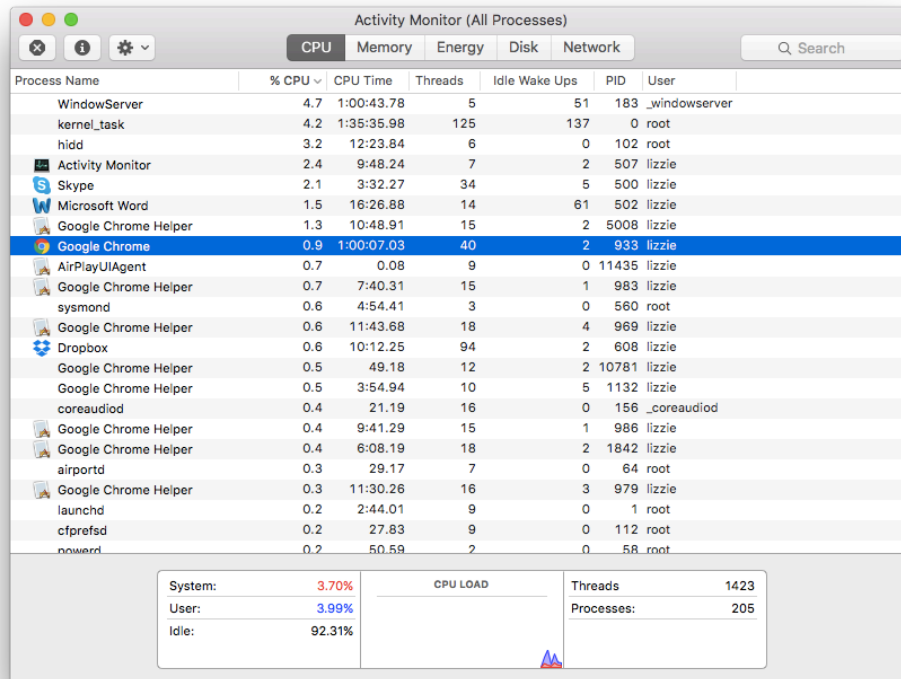
5. Now sort the processes by **Memory** usage and see if anything is taking up too much RAM

IMPORTANT: Do not force-quite system processes - stick to applications you are familiar with.

# Step 7: Speed Up Windows Explorer and Mac Finder

Have you noticed that some of your folders take too long to load even on a fast computer? This usually happens because your Windows Explorer or Mac Finder settings are not optimized. Luckily, that's easy to fix.

On Windows:

No doubt you've noticed that **Documents**, **Music**, **Pictures** and **Video** folders on Windows have different icons. These icons are not there just for your reference, but they tell you what file types these folders are optimized for.

Windows uses a feature called **Automatic Folder Type Discovery**. Basically, it determines which settings work best for your folders. It's right most of the time, but sometimes it makes a mistake, especially when it tries to determine the folder type by last files added to it. That's when you should tap in and control folder optimization:

1. Open a Windows Explorer window, right-click on the misbehaving folder and select **Properties**
2. Go to the **Customize** tab and use the **Optimize folder for** dropdown menu to select the option that fits best
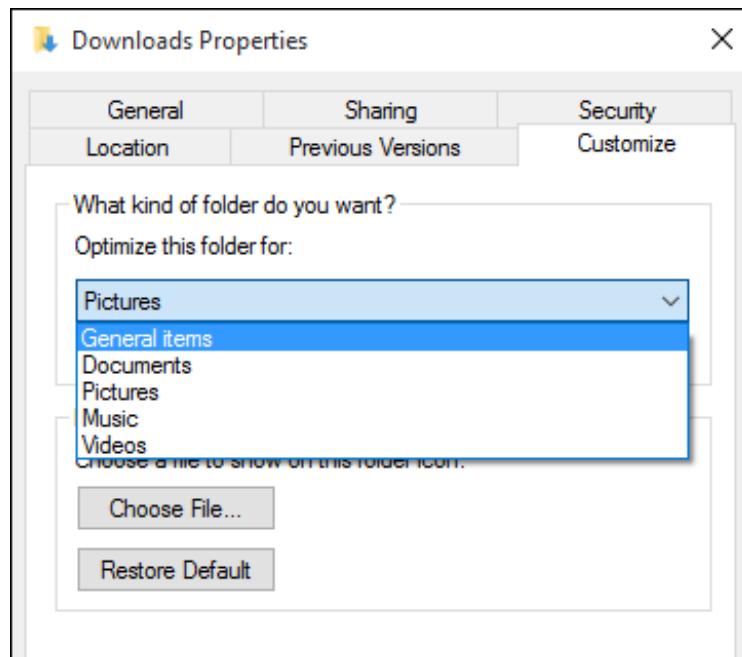

3. Don't forget to check the **Also apply this template to all subfolders** checkbox if you want the subfolders to use the same settings
4. Click **Apply**, then click **OK** and you're done

On a Mac:

Is your Finder taking a while to open? Most likely that's because it opens to an "All my files" view by default and you have a lot of files on your Mac. You can easily make Finder load faster by making it open a specific folder instead:

1. Open **Finder**, go to Finder menu and click on **Preferences**
2. Under **New Finder windows show** select the folder you want Finder to open when you open a new window
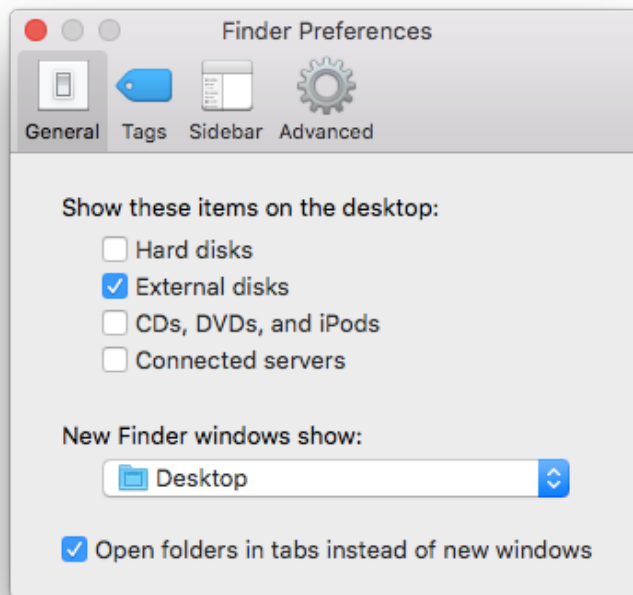
Step 8: Keep Everything Up-to-Date

By now your computer should be a lot faster and a lot more pleasant to use. If you want it to stay that way, make sure you keep your operating system and software up-to-date. The easiest way to do that is to enable automatic updates.

On Windows:

1. Go to Windows desktop, click on the **Start button**, then go to **Settings**
2. Go to **Update & security** and select **Windows Update** from the menu on the left
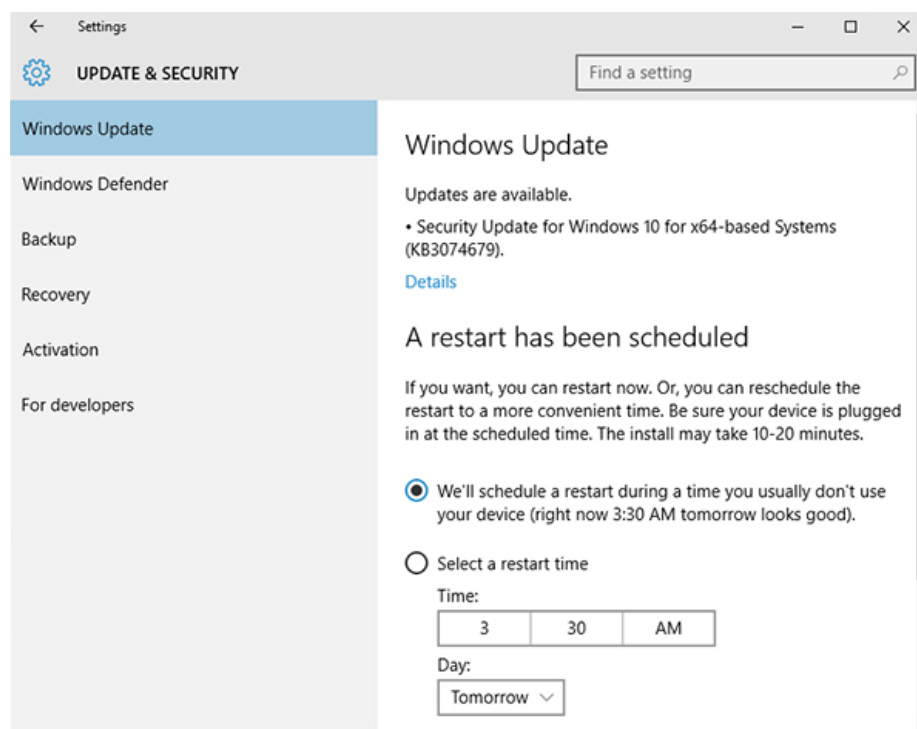
3. Go to **Advanced options** using the link on the right
4. Select **Automatic** if you want everything to get done automatically and check **Give me updates for other Microsoft products when I update Windows**
5. If you want more control over when Windows 10 restarts to apply the updates, select the **Notify to schedule restart option**
6. Windows 10 saves Update settings automatically, so you can simply close the window

NOTE: If you're on Windows 8 or Windows 7, you'll find **Windows Update** settings via **Start → Control Panel → System and Security**.

On a Mac:

Configuring updates on a Mac is even easier than on Windows:

1. Click on the **Apple menu icon** and go to **System Preferences**
2. Click on the **App Store** icon and select whatever checkboxes are relevant to you

OS X Yosemite and El Capitan give you the option to not only download updates in the background, but also install them automatically.

Conclusion

No matter how fast your PC or Mac is when you buy it, it will inevitably become slower. But there are many things you can do to make it work faster and better. Regular computer maintenance can save you a lot of time and money. We hope that this guide will help you keep your PC or Mac fast, secure, and a pleasure to use.

- The WebMinds Team