

We've all wanted to do it. Beat the living day-lights out of our computer. But, before you buy a new computer, try these tips to resolve slowness and lock-up.

SLOWNESS: CLEAN & DEFRAG IT!

My favorite analogy for defragging your hard drive: You've got 4 colors of marbles in a pile on the floor -- blue, red, green, yellow --all mixed up. You only want the blue marbles. You have to sort through all the other colors to separate the blues. But, if you had 4 piles, one pile for each color, it would take you no time to get the blue ones.

Defrag sorts your files into where they are most easily accessible -- putting the same "color" in one pile. That way, when you call up a file, the computer knows right where to find it fast.

Depending upon how much activity your computer sees, the frequency by which you defrag varies. I defrag monthly because I use a lot of different types of files.

Before you DEFRAG, clean up your mess! This includes files you deleted or are considered temporary. They remain on your computer, and, yes, anytime you look for a file, your computer has to sort through this mess, too. So get rid of the trash before you defrag.

Go to: **Programs; > (then to) Accessories; > System Tools; > Disk Clean-up; > OK.**

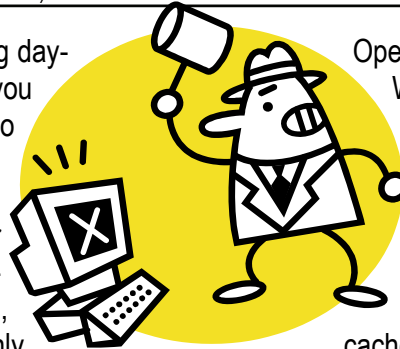
To DEFRAG: Get to **System Tools** again; **> Defrag** (then **Analyze** if that option exists. After Analyze, it will tell you if you need to defrag. If you don't, then this was not causing your slowness problems.) **> OK.**

Now go get a bite to eat, because this will take a while, and, if you hadn't defragged in a while, you should notice an increase in speed.

LOCK-UP: Clean your Cache! Just like CASH is temporarily stored in your purse or wallet, the Computer CACHE is the temporary and work-in-progress section of your computer. If you don't wipe it out, it gets too full and locks up.

When you performed the Disk Clean-up, you got rid of some of the "temp files." But you can get rid of more -- especially if you're on the internet a lot.

REDUCE YOUR INTERNET Temp Files. Check these settings; they may be too high which will fill up your cache. To check:



Open: **Internet Explorer**

Work Offline if you're dial-up; Go To: **Tools; >Internet Options**

Under the **General Tab:**

- a. Under **Temporary Internet Files**, click **Settings**. Adjust the amount of disk space. Hit **OK** (I have mine set at 500 mb; I'm on all the time and need cache for other programs. Some may need to have more storage, so set higher.)
- b. Also, hit **Delete Cookies** if you want to clean up even more. Note, though, that you'll have to re-enter any of your automatic logons, like ebay, that you might have stored.
- c. And under **History**, check how many days are set. Reduce that number. I keep mine at 1.

Under the **Advanced Tab**, scroll down to **SECURITY** and make sure that the box is checked next to "**Empty Temporary Internet files when Browser is closed.**"

CAUTION: I suggest not messing with anything else under this Advanced Tab without talking to a bona-fide guru or internet tech.

Check your Drive for Errors! Go to **My Computer; RIGHT CLICK your C Drive > Properties > Tools> Check Now.** Then Defrag again.

Make sure your Windows is UP TO DATE! XPs Service Pak 2 resolved a lot of problems. Go to **Internet Explorer** while online **> Tools > Windows Update.** You'll be automatically connected to the right site; it will check your computer to see if it is current. If not, it will tell you what updates you need.

These few steps should help speed up your computer and stop your Lock-ups. I apologize to those using Netscape. I haven't used it in years and don't know if the directions are the same.

Remember to think of your dial-up friends when sending those BIG emails with moving parts or pictures. It can take 20 minutes to download! Meanwhile they can't use their phone or get or send other email. And it loads up their cache, slowing their computer. Shame on you!