

# Automate maintenance tasks for Windows computers

This article will provide information on how to create and automate a maintenance schedule to keep your computer running 'smoothly'.

*QuanTriMang* - Most people usually do some action after their computer is slow:

- Speed up your computer by buying more RAM
- Try adjusting some computer settings
- Abandoned because they discovered that the device was too old, could not do anything else. It's time to buy a new computer.

All of these solutions help speed up your computer. However, what made your new, fast-running computer become slow after only a few months of use? Even a heavily fragmented hard drive is also capable of slowing down a computer with a "terrible" configuration.



A user choice should be made to create a computer maintenance plan - the computer maintenance schedule is easy to set up and done so you don't have to pay attention to it. The plan this article provides will use tools that are already built into the Windows operating system, including **Disk Defragmenter**.

This article will provide information on how to create and automate a maintenance schedule to keep your computer running 'smoothly'. The methods mentioned below will vary with each version of the operating system, but generally you will find them effective for Windows 7, Windows Vista, and Windows XP.

## Plan computer maintenance

When feeling that the performance of the device becomes slow, the most common reason is the hard drive. The computer hard drive is a place that cannot be moved, containing all the information contained in the device. Over time, hard drives gradually lose their ability to store data efficiently.

The Windows operating system offers 3 great tools to keep your hard drive running smoothly, including Disk Cleanup, Disk Defragmenter, and Check Disk. Better yet, every week users should delete temporary files from the computer, optimize (defragment) the drive and check if the drive has errors. However, the possibility that you will not have much time to monitor and implement this calendar. The best solution is to have Windows automatically do those tasks.

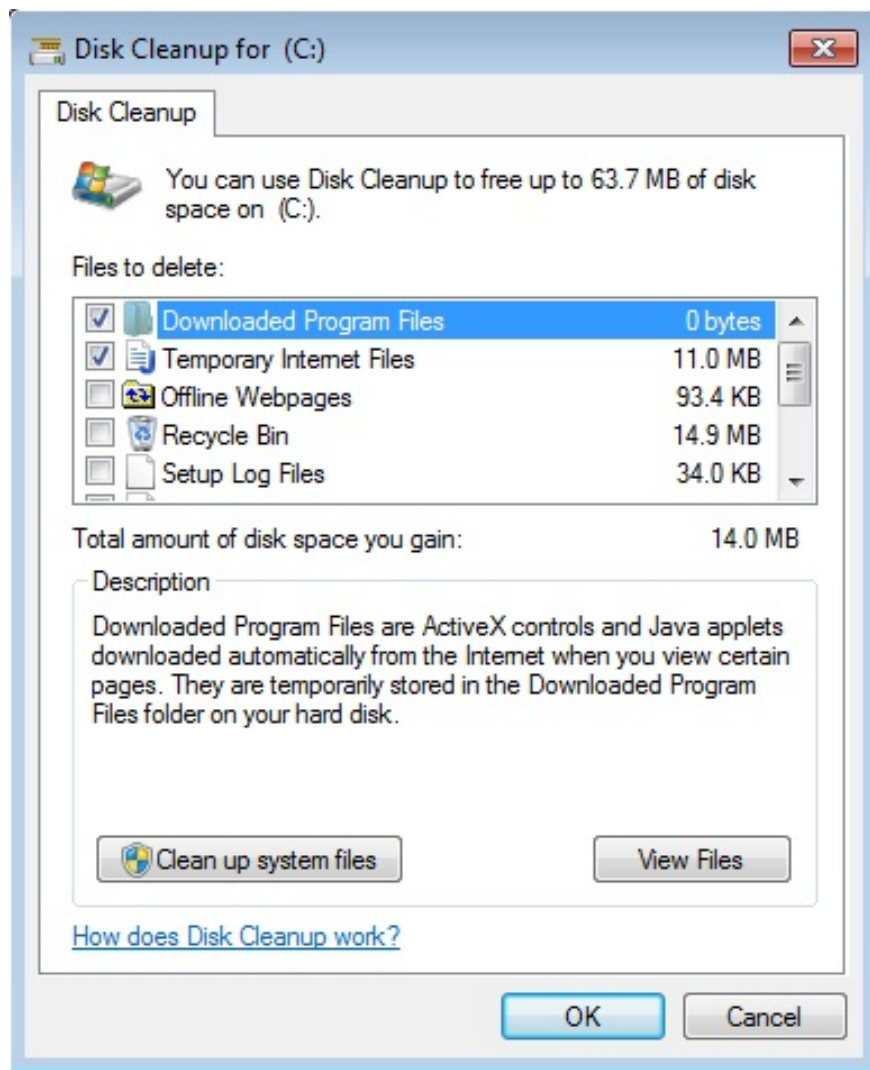
Windows allows you to set up and automate such tasks. Remember that the above tools will require user or decentralization impact to be able to operate. The sections below will guide you in more detail.

Tip: In Windows 7 and Windows Vista, you can go directly to the above tools. Just click on the **Start** button, in the **Search** dialog box, type the name of the tool you need to use. When you see the name of the tool displayed in the search list, click on it.

## Clean up the hard drive

Computers 'accumulate' temporary files over time. These files can come from a variety of sources, with the source mostly coming from websites. After a period of accumulation, they will slow down the speed of the computer.

Once a week, you should run the Windows Disk Cleanup tool to delete these files from your computer. This tool requires user impact to complete tasks. Therefore, we recommend that when you schedule this tool to run automatically, you should choose when you are still using your computer to make a decision. When using the Create Basic Task Wizard, select the **Open the Properties dialog box for this task when I click Finish** . This gives you access to many other properties related to the task in progress. On the **Settings tab** , select the **Run task as soon** dialog box **as possible after a scheduled start is missed** to make sure the task will start at the time you log on to the next machine.



## Disk Cleanup scheduler runs automatically:

### In Windows 7

1. Open **Task Scheduler** : Click the **Start** button ? **Control Panel** ? **Administrative Tools** , double-click **Task Scheduler** . If required to enter an administrator password or confirm, enter the password or provide the required information.
2. Click the **Action** menu ? **Create Basic Task**. This will open the **Create Basic Task Wizard** .
3. Enter a name for the task and note (optional). Then, click **Next** .
4. To schedule performance based on a specific time, click on **Daily** , **Weekly** , **Monthly** , or **One time** - equivalent to daily, weekly, monthly or only once. Next, click **Next** .
5. Determine the calendar you want to use and click **Next** .
6. Click Start a program, and then click **Next** .
7. Select **Browse** , and in the **File name** dialog box, type **cleanmgr.exe** , click **Open** , and click **Next** .

8. Finally, select **Finish** .

### **In Windows Vista**

1. Open **Task Scheduler** : Click the **Start** button ? **Administrative Tools** ? **Task Scheduler**. If required to enter an administrator password or confirm, enter the password or provide the required information.

2. Click the **Action** menu ? **Create Basic Task**.

3. Enter a name for the task and note (optional). Then, click **Next** .

4. To schedule execution based on a specific time, click on **Daily** , **Weekly** , **Monthly** , or **One time** . Next, click **Next** .

5. Determine the calendar you want to use and click **Next** .

6. Click **Start a program** , and then click **Next** .

7. Select **Browse** , and in the **File name** dialog box, type **cleanmgr.exe** , click **Open** , and click **Next** .

8. Finally, select **Finish** .

### **In Windows XP**

1. Click **Start** ? **Control Panel**.

2. In the Control Panel, click **Performance and Maintenance** .

3. Under icon or pick a **Control Panel icon** , click **Scheduled Tasks** .

4. In the **Scheduled Tasks** window, double-click **Add Scheduled Task** .

5. In the **Scheduled Task Wizard** , click **Next** .

6. Scroll down and find **Disk Cleanup** in the list of applications, click it or highlight and select **Next** .

7. Under the **Perform this task section** , select **Weekly** , and then click **Next** .

8. Set the time and date of the week you want to run the Disk Cleanup tool. For the best results, choose a time when you are still using your computer. Next, click **Next** .

9. Enter the password in both dialog boxes **Enter the password** and **Confirm password** , then click **Next**.

10. Finally, select **Finish** .

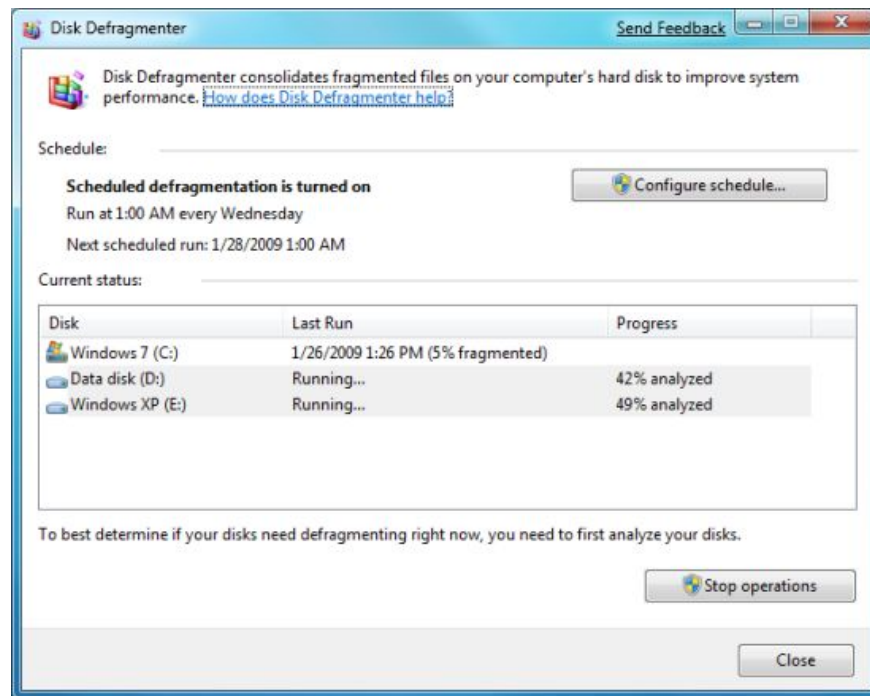
## **Optimize fragmented files**

Whenever a user stores a file that is too large on a hard drive location, the computer will split the file into several pieces (pieces). Even so, you don't have to worry too much. The computer can still track all the pieces, connecting them to each other whenever the user accesses the file.

However, when fragmented files are 'accumulated' on the hard drive, the computer will also slow down. This is because the computer must search all parts of the file to connect them to a complete part.

Although you have no way to prevent file splitting, Windows has a tool (Disk Defragmenter) to solve this problem. Disk Defragmenter will arrange the file fragments, help recover the free space on the hard drive as well as make the machine work faster.

Therefore, once a week you should run the Windows Disk Defragmenter tool.



**Note :** Windows 7 and most versions of Windows Vista have been configured to run the Disk Defragmenter tool weekly. Follow the instructions below to check whether this tool has been set up or change the current calendar.

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## Set up Disk Defragmenter to run automatically:

### In Windows 7

1. Open **Disk Defragmenter** : Click the **Start** button ? **All Programs** ? **Accessories** ? **System Tools** ? **Disk Defragmenter**. If required to enter an administrator password or confirm, enter the password or provide the required information.
2. Click **Configure schedule** .
3. In the Disk Defragmenter: **Modify Schedule** dialog box, select the frequency for the tool: what day and time of the day you want to run defrag, run on any drive. Then, click **OK** .
4. Click **OK** .

### In Windows Vista

1. Open **Disk Defragmenter** : Click the **Start** button ? **All Programs ? Accessories ? System Tools ? Disk Defragmenter**. If required to enter an administrator password or confirm, enter the password or provide the required information.
2. Click **Modify schedule** .
3. In the Disk Defragmenter: **Modify Schedule** dialog box, select the frequency for the tool: what day and time of the day you want to run defrag, run on any drive. Then, click **OK** .
4. Click on **OK** .

### **In Windows XP**

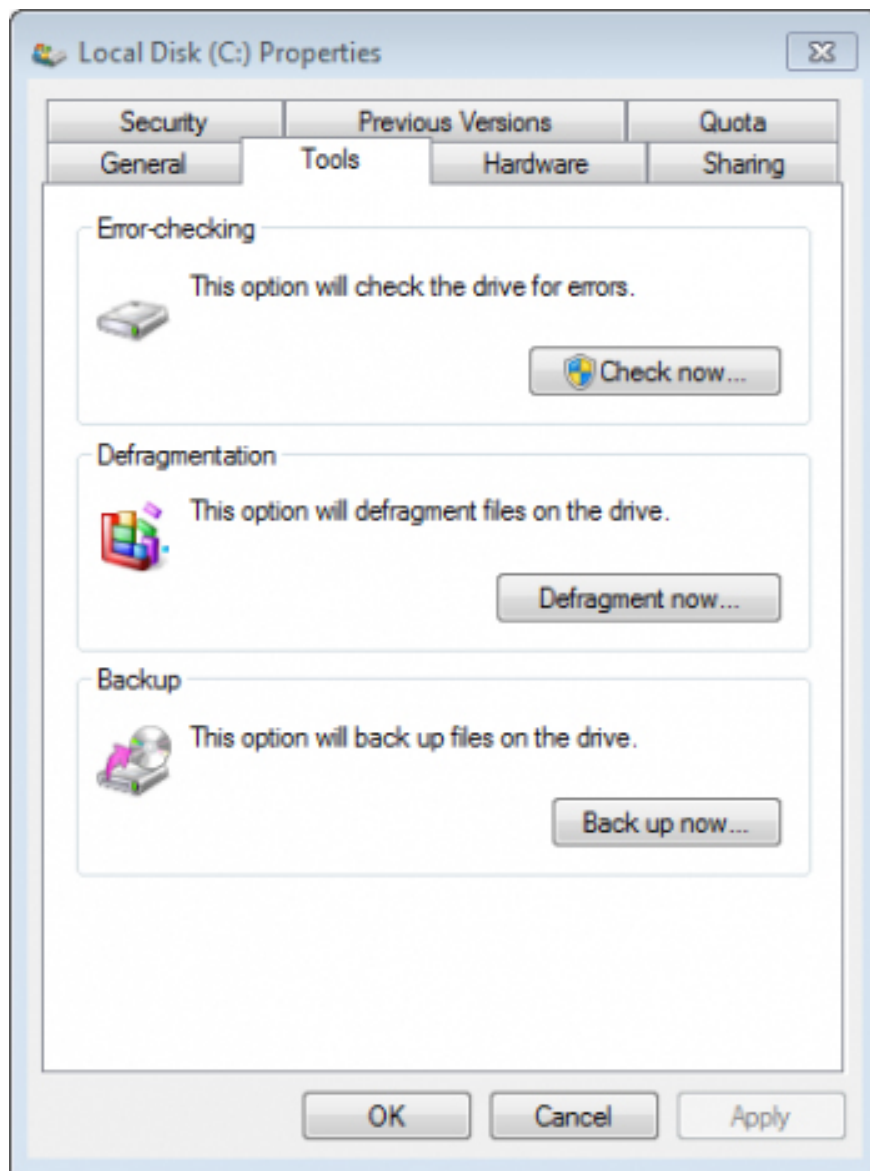
1. Click **Start ? Control Panel**.
2. Select **Performance and Maintenance**.
3. Under **or pick a Control Panel icon** , click **Scheduled Tasks** .
4. In the **Scheduled Tasks** window, double-click **Add Scheduled Task**.
5. In the **Scheduled Task Wizard** , click **Next** .
6. Click **Browse** .
7. In the **File name** dialog box, type **% systemroot% system32defrag.exe** , and then click **Open** .
8. Under **Perform this task section** , click **Weekly ? Next**.
9. Set the time and day of the week you want to run the defragmentation tool for your hard drive. To get the best results, choose when you usually use the device. Next, click **Next** .
10. Enter the password in both dialog boxes **Enter the password** and **Confirm password** , then click **Next** .
11. Check the **Open advanced properties for this task when I** dialog box **Click Finish** , then click **Finish** .
12. In the **Run** dialog box, add **C:** to the currently displayed command. Remember to have a space before ' **C:** '. Then, click **OK** .
13. In the **Set Account Information** dialog box, enter the password in both the **Password** and **Confirm password** dialog boxes, then click **OK** .

## **Check for errors on the hard drive**

If you are using any software that has an error, your computer may have created an error on the hard drive. These errors even slow down the performance of the device. However, Windows can 'save' you in this case with the Check Disk tool. This tool will solve all such errors on the hard drive, making the computer work better.

Once a week, you should run the Check Disk tool. When Check Disk is active, a window will appear. If you're working on a computer when this window is open, you can ignore it. The window will automatically close when

the Check Disk tool completes the job.



**Note:** Users need to login with an administrator account to perform the steps below. If logging in is not an admin account, you can only change the settings that apply to user accounts.

## **Set up Check Disk to run automatically:**

### **In Windows 7**

1. Open **Task Scheduler** : Click the **Start** button ? **Control Panel** ? **Administrative Tools** ? **Task Scheduler**. If required to enter an administrator password or confirm, enter the password or provide the required information.
2. Click the **Action** menu ? **Create Basic Task**.
3. Enter a name for the task and add a description for it (optional). Next, click **Next** .

4. Perform one of the following actions:

To schedule execution based on a specific time, click on **Daily** , **Weekly** , **Monthly** , or **One time** - equivalent to daily, weekly, monthly or only once. Next, click **Next** .

To select a calendar based on a recurring event, click **When the computer starts** or **When I log on** , then click **Next** .

To create a calendar based on a specific event, click **When a specific event is logged ? Next** , select the event log and other information via the drop-down list, then click **Next** .

5. To schedule a software to start automatically, click **Start a program ? Next**.

6. Click **Browse** to find the software you want and select **Next** .

7. Finally, click **Finish** .

### **In Windows Vista**

1. Open **Task Scheduler** : Click the **Start** button ? **Administrative Tools** ? **Task Scheduler**. If required to enter an administrator password or confirm, enter the password or provide the required information.

2. Click the **Action** menu and select **Create Basic Task**.

3. Enter a name for the task and add a description for it (optional). Next, click **Next** .

4. Perform one of the following actions:

- To schedule execution based on a specific time, click on **Daily** , **Weekly** , **Monthly** , or **One time** - equivalent to daily, weekly, monthly or only once. Next, click **Next** .

- To select a calendar based on a recurring event, click **When the computer starts** or **When I log on**, then click **Next** .

- To create a calendar based on a specific event, click **When a specific event is logged ? Next** , select the event log and other information via the drop-down list, then click **Next** .

5. To schedule a software to start automatically, click **Start a program ? Next** .

6. Click **Browse** to find the software you want and select **Next** .

7. Finally, click **Finish** .

### **In Windows XP**

1. Click **Start** ? **Control Panel**.

2. Click **Performance and Maintenance**.

3. Under the **or pick a Control Panel icon** , select **Scheduled Tasks** .

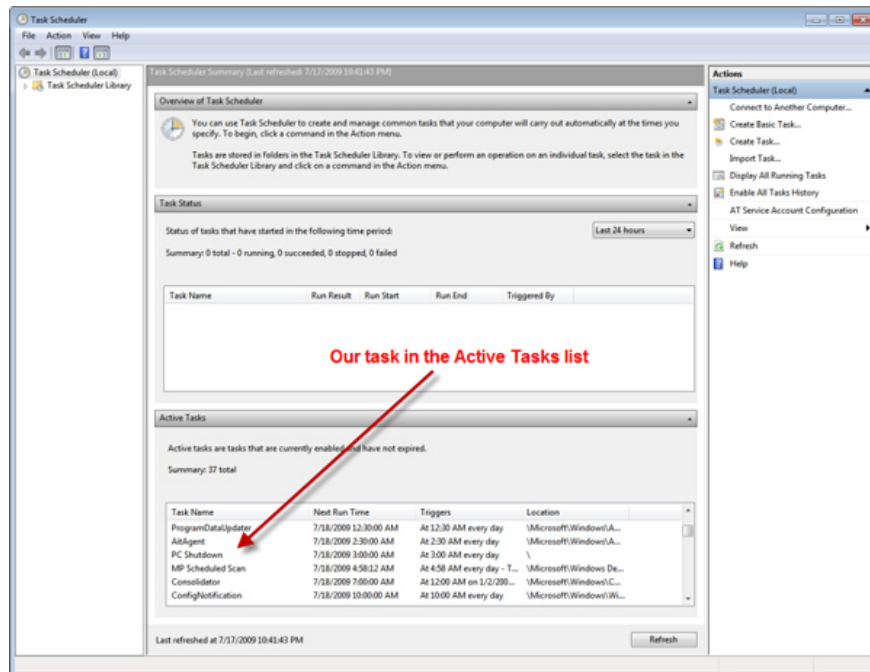
4. In the **Scheduled Tasks** window, double-click **Add Scheduled Task** .
5. In the **Scheduled Task Wizard** , click **Next** .
6. Click **Browse** .
7. In the **File name** dialog box, type **% systemroot% system32chkdsk.exe** , and click **Open** .
8. Under **Perform this task** , click **Weekly** . Then, click **Next** .
9. Set the time and date of the week you want to run **Check Disk** . Similar to the above 2 tools, users should choose when to use the computer. Next, click **Next** .
10. Enter the password in both dialog boxes **Enter the password** and **Confirm password** , and click **Next** .
11. Finally, click **Finish** .

Follow the steps in **Task Scheduler** to schedule a software to run at a certain time.

**Note:** Check Disk does not appear in the list of software you choose from Task Scheduler. Therefore, you will have to choose it manually. To select, click **Browse** . Then navigate to **windowssystem32chkdsk.exe** . Next, select **chkdsk.exe** , and click **Open** .

## Schedule tasks

The best way to schedule the above tasks depends on how you use your computer. For example, if you turn off your computer every day, schedule tasks to be performed for a period of time while you're still using the device. Users can do this by editing the **Task properties properties** described in the steps above. On the **Settings tab** , check the **Run task as soon** dialog box **as possible after a scheduled start is missed** when creating a new task. This will ensure that the tasks will start on the next computer login if you accidentally turn off the computer at the time it is scheduled to run. If you set the computer to **Hibernate** or **Sleep** and want to schedule running tasks in these states, in the **Conditions** tab, check the **Wake the computer** dialog box **to run this task** . If you do not want to set these parameters during the initial installation, you can go back and access them via **Task Scheduler** . Just search for the task in the **Task Scheduler Library** , and double-click it. Then, the **Properties** dialog box of the task you choose will appear.



## Let Windows do all the work

These automated tasks are the foundation that your computer performance depends pretty much. Fortunately, Windows can do it. Users will no longer have to worry about these tasks anymore. You just need to set up the maintenance task once, automate them and let Windows do the rest.

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