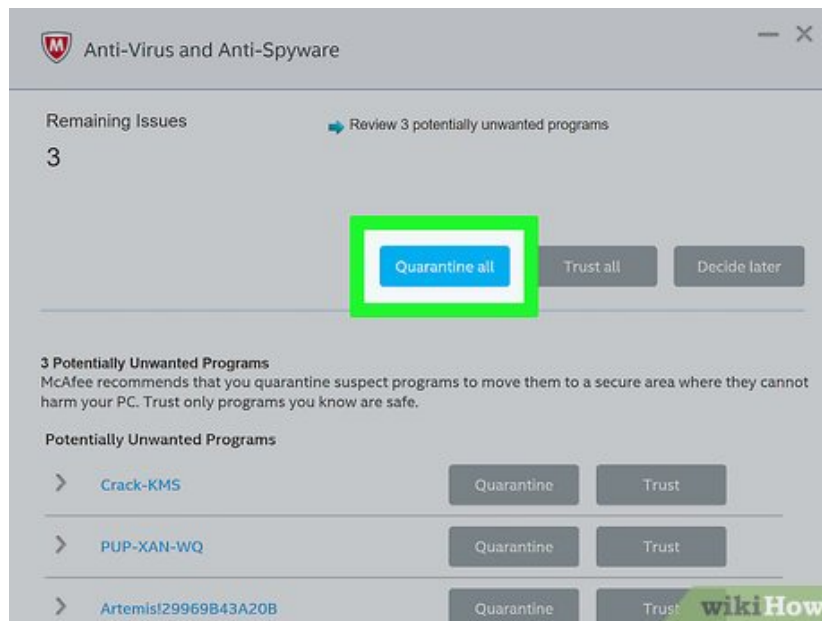


How to Service a Computer

Computers are complex collections of hardware and software, and there is a lot that can go wrong. Knowing how to fix problems with your own computer can save you a lot of money in service fees and new hardware, and can keep your computer...

Part 1 of 2:

Maintaining Your Operating System



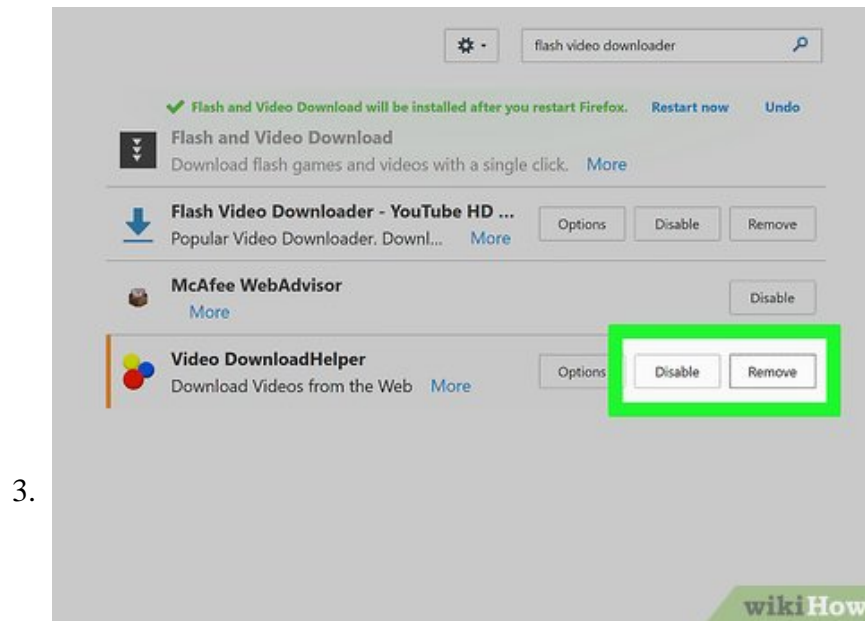
1.

Remove viruses. Viruses are the main cause of most people's computer problems. Removing viruses and ensuring that you remain virus-free will help your computer's health significantly.

1. If you don't have one already, install an antivirus program. Mac users should install an antivirus program as well, as Macs are becoming larger targets for viruses.

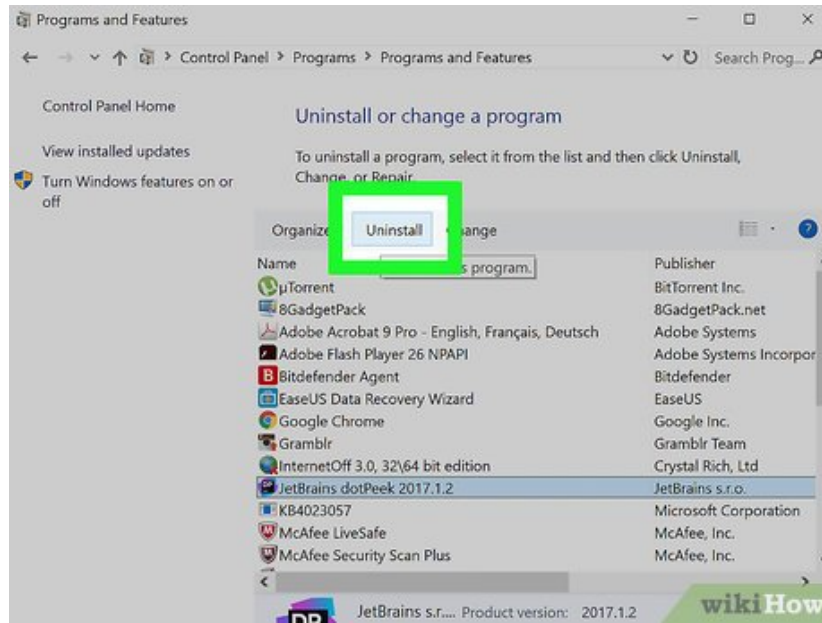


Remove adware. Adware are programs that are often installed alongside other programs, and can be difficult to get rid of. These programs send you targeted ads and may hijack your browser. Some are a risk to your personal information



Uninstall unwanted browser toolbars. Too many toolbars can cause your browser to slow to a crawl, and many can be incredibly difficult to remove. If you can't remove the toolbars, no matter what you try, you may need to reinstall your browser or install a different browser.

4.



Uninstall unused programs. If you have a lot of programs installed that you don't use, they will sit on your hard drive taking up space, and potentially slowing your computer down by running in the background. Go through your programs list and remove any programs that you don't use anymore.

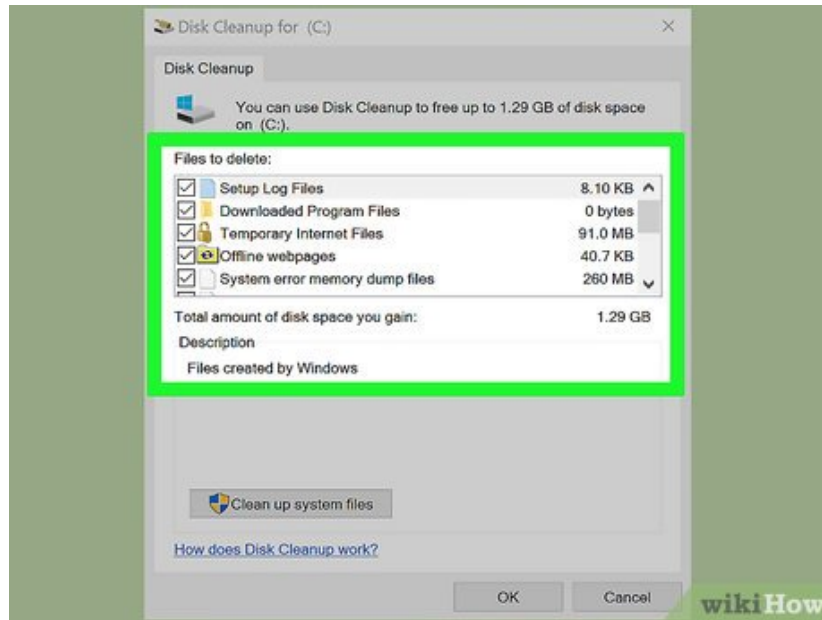
1. See this guide for instructions on deleting programs in OS X.

5.

Name	Publisher	Status	Startup impact
Setuplauncher		Enabled	Not measured
VMware Tools Core Service	VMware, Inc.	Enabled	Not measured
McAfee Security Scanner Sc...	McAfee, Inc.	Enabled	Not measured
AcroTray	Adobe Systems Inc.	Disabled	None
Adobe Acrobat SpeedLaunc...	Adobe Systems Incorpo...	Disabled	None
Steam Client Bootstrapper	Valve Corporation	Disabled	None
μTorrent	BitTorrent Inc.	Disabled	None
Microsoft OneDrive	Microsoft Corporation	Disabled	None
WinZip Preloader	WinZip Computing, S.L.	Disabled	None
WinZip Update Notifier	WinZip Computing, S.L.	Disabled	None
Windows Desktop Gadgets	Microsoft Corporation	Disabled	None

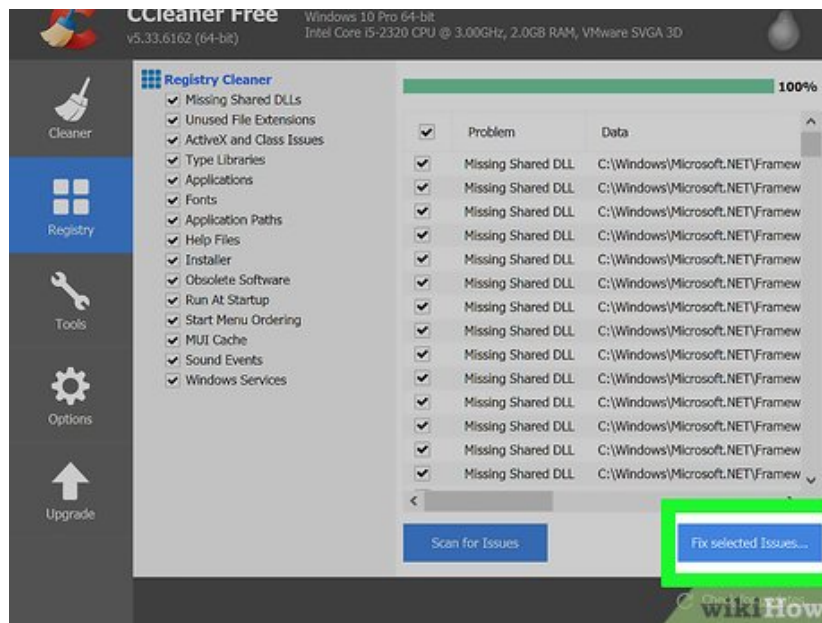
Clean up your startup process. Lots of programs, both legitimate and illegitimate, will attach themselves to your startup process. When you get too many programs trying to start when your operating system is loading, it can really slow your computer down.

6.

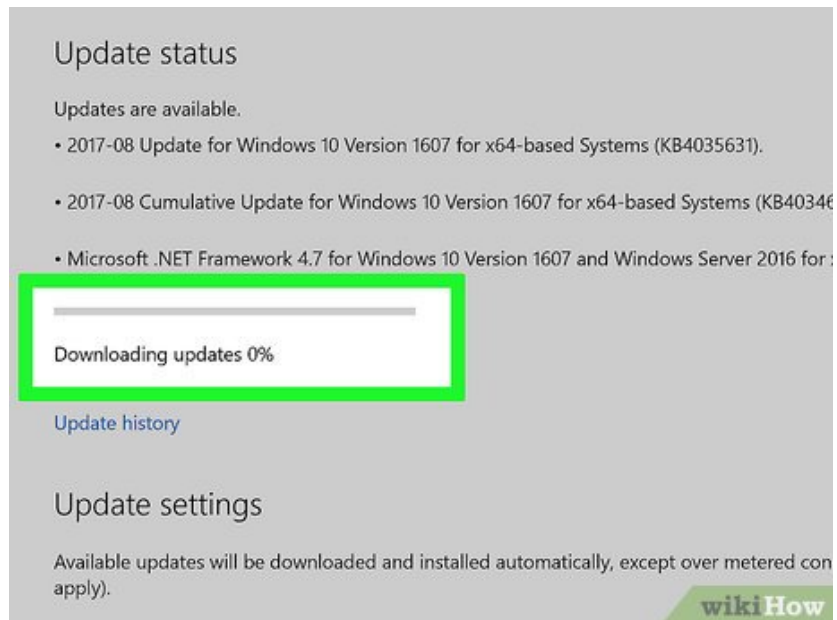


Free up hard disk space. For optimal efficiency, your hard disk should always have at least 15% of the space on it available, preferably at least 25%. Having more free space allows your operating system to move files around during installation and defragmenting.

7.



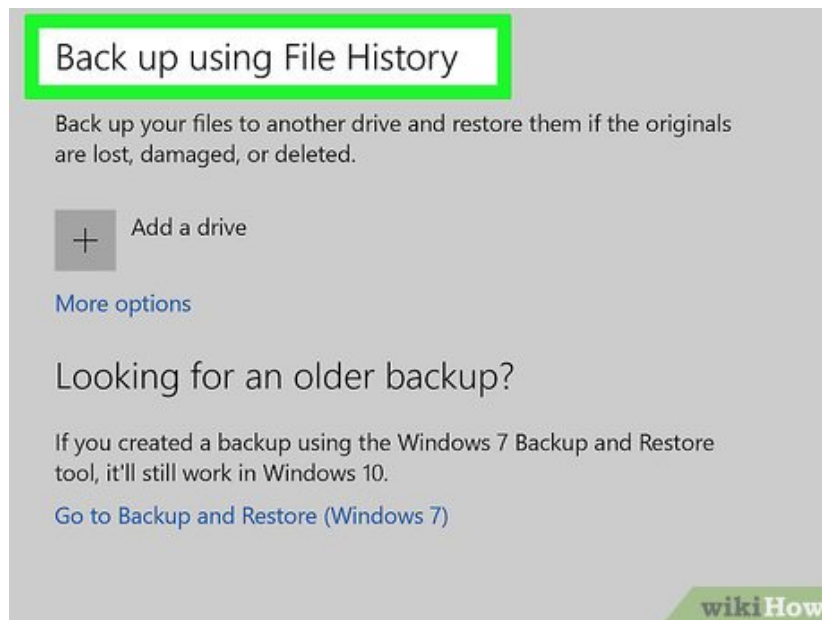
Clean the registry (Windows). Your Windows registry contains information for all of your installed programs. Oftentimes, when a program is uninstalled, it will leave behind entries in the registry. As these pile up, Windows can take longer to find the entries it needs.



8.

Install updates. Oftentimes, updating your operating system will fix a particular problem you've been having. Installing the latest updates will also help ensure that your computer is as secure as possible from outside attacks.

1. See this guide for instructions for updating OS X.



9.

Set up a backup system. When bad things happen to your computer, the worst potential loss is your data. Setting up a backup system will help protect your important files from hardware failure or a virus attack. Having backups of everything important makes changing your hardware much less stressful as well.

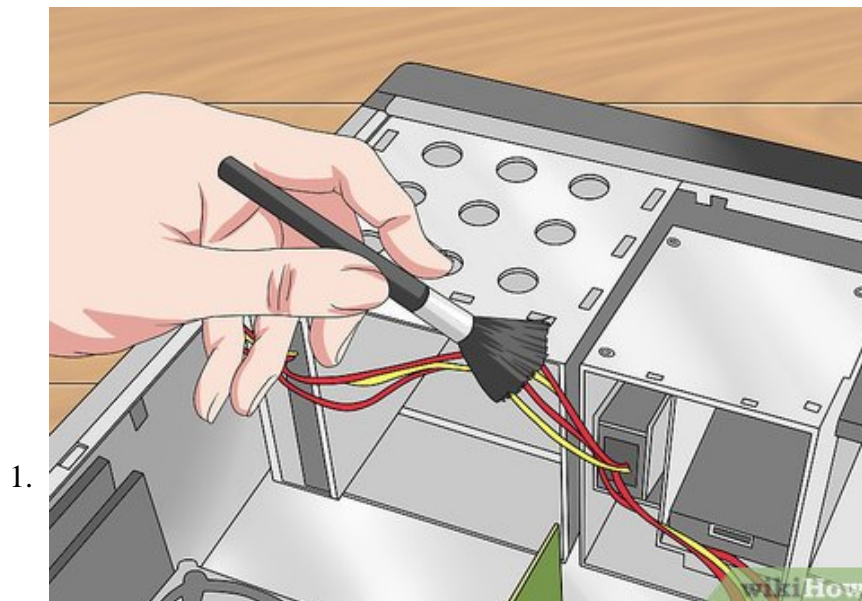


Reinstall your operating system. If you just can't solve a problem you're having with your operating system, it may be easier to just reinstall the operating system and start over. Having your data backed up will make the reinstallation process very painless.

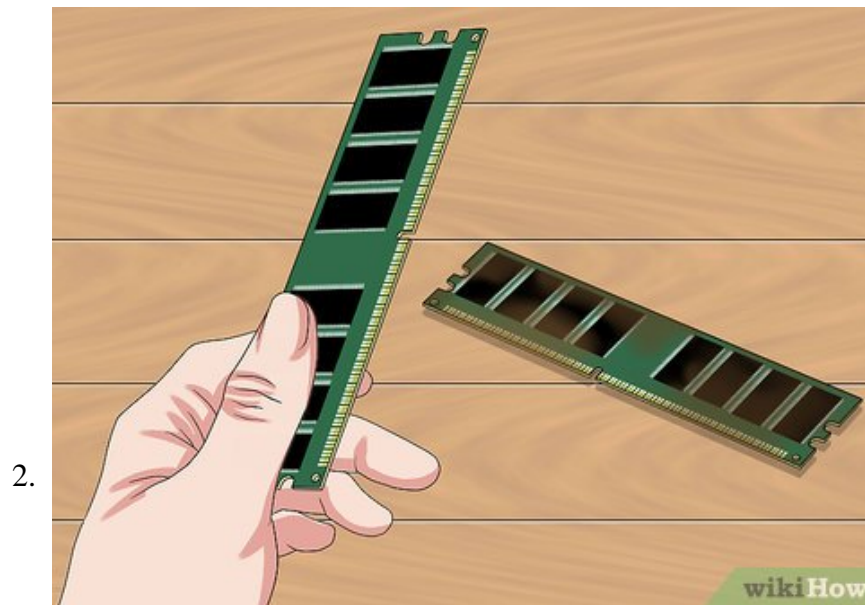
1. Reinstall Windows 7
2. Reinstall Windows 8
3. Reinstall OS X

Part 2 of 2:

Maintaining and Replacing Hardware

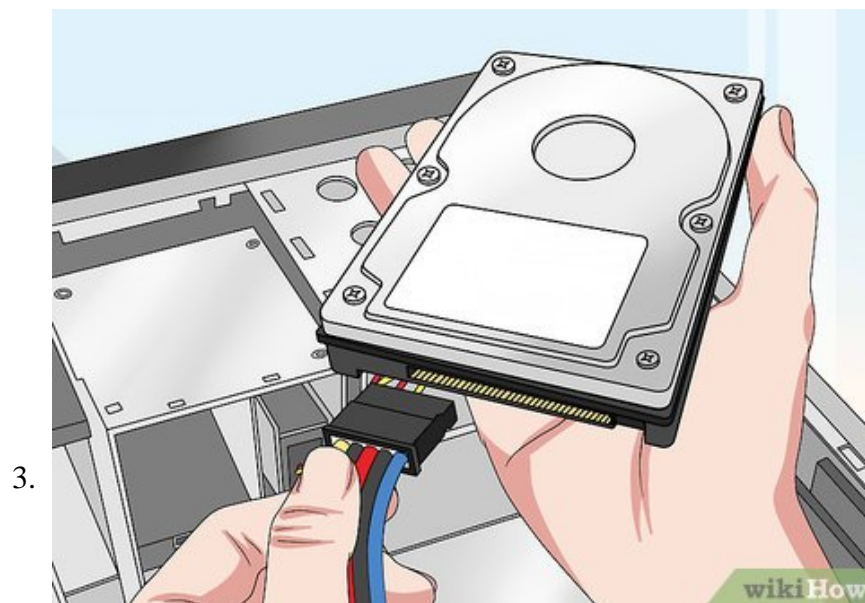


Clean your computer to prevent overheating. Unless you work in a perfectly sterile environment, dust *will* build up in your computer. Dust can cause your components to overheat and can clog fans. Too much dust can also lead to short circuits. Try to clean out the dust inside your computer monthly.



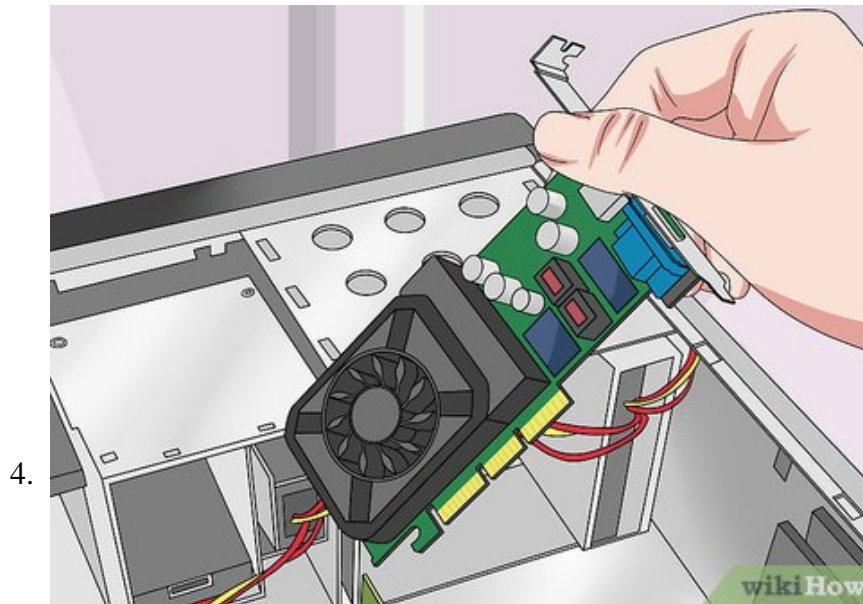
Replace failing RAM. If your operating system is crashing often, you may have faulty memory. Replacing RAM is one of the easier hardware tasks that you can perform, but picking the right RAM can be difficult.

1. You can test your memory using a program called MemTest86.

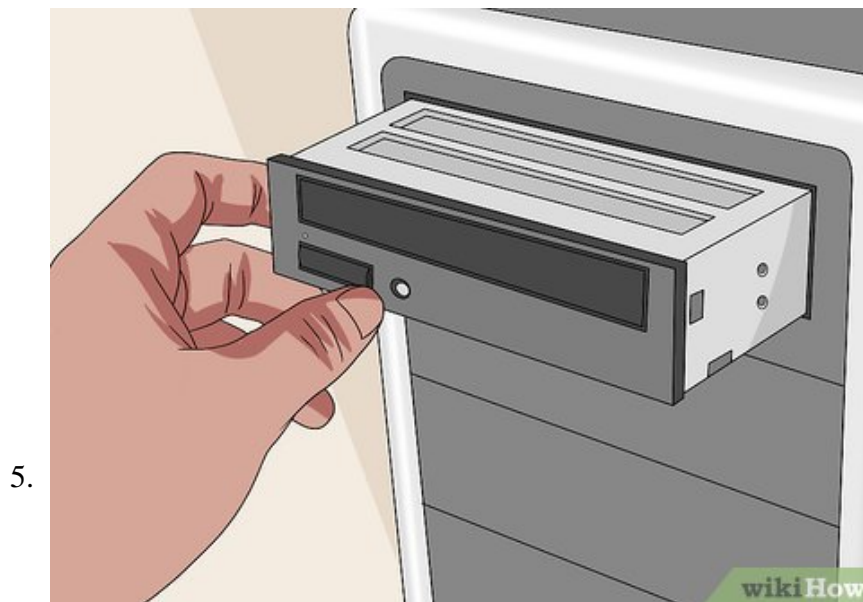


Replace a failing hard drive. If you're having problems installing programs, files are getting corrupted, or you are experiencing crashes, your hard drive may be failing. There are several ways that you can check your hard disk for errors which may be fixable. If your hard drive has failed completely, you can install a new one.

1. If the hard drive that failed contained your operating system, you will need to reinstall it after installing the drive.

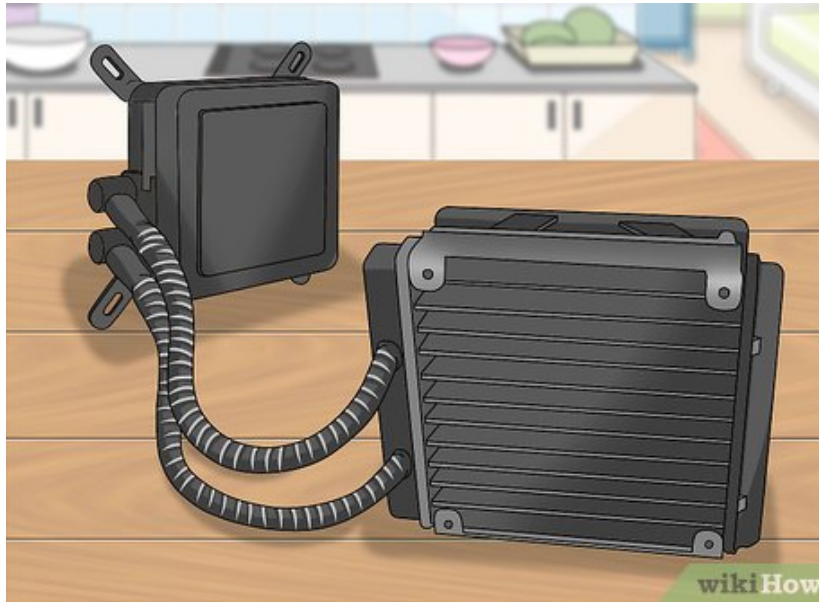


Replace a faulty video card. If the colors are completely wrong or your images is distorted, your video card may be failing. If you can, test the card by plugging in a different monitor first before committing to a new video card.



Install a new optical drive. If your disc drive isn't reading discs properly, or it's very loud when reading a disc, you may need to install a new drive. Basic DVD drives are very cheap, and you can have the new drive installed in just a few minutes.

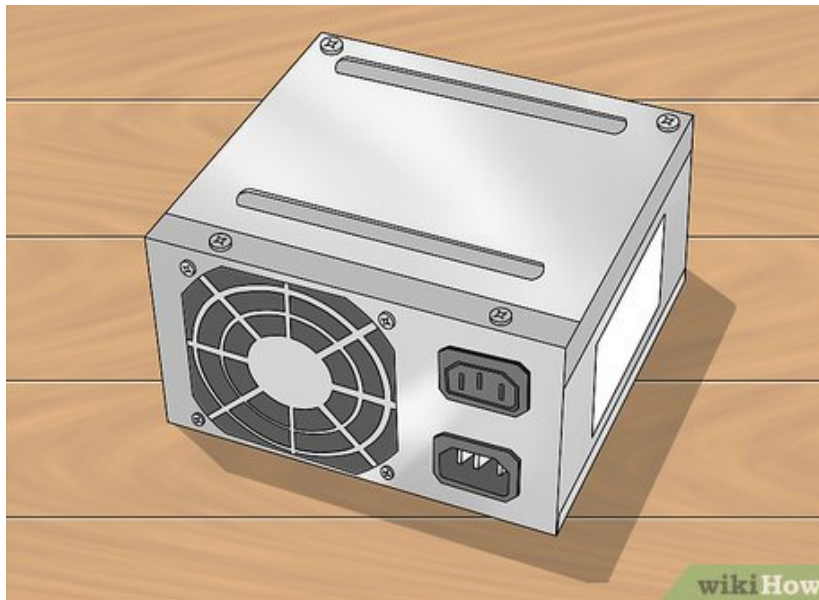
6.



Install fans to lower the temperature. If your computer is overheating, you can be causing serious damage to your components. Many computers will shut themselves down if a certain temperature is reached, so if you are experiencing shutdowns, especially when running intensive programs, your computer may be overheating. Installing more fans or replacing defective ones can make a big difference on the internal temperature.

1. You can install software to monitor the temperatures inside your computer.

7.



Replace a failing power supply. If your computer is randomly shutting off, or isn't turning on, your power supply may be failing or dead. You can test your power supply to see if it's the culprit. If it is, you can replace it with a newer or more powerful one.

8.



Build a new computer. If you've tried everything and your computer is just not speeding up, it may be time to start over. Building a new computer is less scary than it sounds, and you may be able to reuse some of your existing components (if they're not too old).

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