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Painfully Slow Computer? by [UmerSheikh](#)

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Put the baseball bat away. Take three deep breaths. Have a drink of water. We know a slow computer is about as frustrating as the power going out in the last five minutes of game seven in the Stanley Cup Final. Pounding fists and spewing forth a stream of expletives is understandable. Doesn't it always seem as though your PC is the most lethargic when time is short? Of course it does. However, as much as Microsoft, Apple, Dell and Gateway would love you to give up on the old one and purchase a shiny new unit - you probably don't need to. Let us show you why. No doubt you have heard of registries in relation to software, not the wedding or baby kind. Each time software is installed on a computer there is an entry on the registry to determine configuration. Each time you uninstall there is an entry. When the registries have a lot of entries from old software it slows down the processing of the computer. When the registry is damaged it can stop drivers from loading, like printer and graphics drivers. Additionally it is very common for Windows registries to be kept in sync with the file system, so if your file system is corrupted or a vital COM file has been deleted, your computer will be sluggish. Running an online scan for registry errors is a very good first step in troubleshooting. Also consider the use of registry booster software. Many newbie computer users immediately assume if their PC is slower than usual it is due to a virus. Viruses are usually very easy to notice, unusual pop-up windows will appear warning the user their virus software needs an update. A virus is definitely a possibility, but it is not the only option. Spy ware is also very damaging to computer speed, and much more covert. It sits in the background recording every key stroke, every mouse click, and every website and takes all the information to its host - a dubious fellow whose only aim in life is to make money off your personal information. The best way to deal with a virus is through the use of a reputable anti-virus program and to run scans on a weekly basis. Most good anti-virus software also takes care of spy ware, but it is important to keep up with the scans and updates.

Memory can also cause a computer to slow down, or rather the lack of memory. There are many types of memory when it comes to computers, but the two most commonly referred to are Read Access Memory or RAM, and hard drive storage. Notice the use of the word storage when speaking of the hard drive memory; this is in an effort to differentiate between mass storage elements on the computer and working memory, which is what RAM is. When computer memory and storage become bogged down with files and background software then there isn't enough left over to run the latest programs. Adding memory to your unit may be necessary, but it would also be a good idea to go through your files and delete unnecessary items. Photos and videos take up the most space on the hard drive, so considering transferring them to an external hard drive or burning them to discs.

When a computer is running, and with each file you view or make changes to, a little block of memory is used. That block of memory is chosen according to its position inline of use. For example, blocks one to ten may be in use by your email system, so block eleven will be used for the file changes. When you shut down your email system, the information you saved in block eleven does not move down to block one, it stays where it is. The next time you start using a program or changing a file blocks one to ten will come into use again, and if needed will use block twelve and beyond. So over time your storage becomes fragmented with little bits of information in all different places, slowing down your computer function. This is exactly why it is important to defragment once a month or so. Believe it or not, dust and heat are big factors in slowing down a computer. When the inside of a desktop PC becomes dusty the fans slowly down, even become blocked. When the fans cannot keep the processor and motherboard cool, the functionality decreases. An even worse event would be particles of dust actually penetrating the hard disks themselves, causing possible loss in memory and complete operational breakdown. The best prevention is giving the inside of your tower a clean out with compressed air, making sure to turn off and unplug the computer first. Be gentle, be

Careful and clean it out every month or so. It is also important not to have your computer in an enclosed space during use. Keep it out uncovered and in a place where air can flow. All of the above scenarios are relatively easy solutions for a painfully slow computer. With a little effort and a lot of patience you can extend the life of your PC by following these instructions on a regular basis.

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