

## **Preventive measure to keep your computer healthy**

**1. Backup, backup backup!** Backing up your data just means saving your files to a separate location (like a cd, floppy or zip disk) so in event of disaster you can easily copy your files back onto your computer. How often really depends on you. Just ask yourself, "If I only back up once every 3 months, would anything I saved on my hard drive since the last time I saved it on a backup be all right if I could NEVER get it back?"

**2. Invest in an UPS (uninterruptible power source).** A UPS is a wonderful device that works as a surge protector and a battery backup all in one! Not only does it keep your computer safe from electrical spikes that can be traveling through the lines, it also gives you time to save your work, and properly power down your computer in event of a power failure. You don't lose your work, and your computer gets to be shut down properly.

**3. Never turn the computer off with the power switch.** The one exception to this rule is when your computer locks up and your hard drive is not running (the hard drive light is not blinking). In this situation, you can turn the power off without harmful effects to the hard drive. As cutting the power can also result in lost data or Windows files, you should only do this when you have to. Doing this can help prevent permanent hard drive damage caused by the hard drive heads contacting the surface of the drive disc. This can prevent a host of Windows problems. Whenever possible, recover from crashes by pressing the Ctrl + Alt + Delete keys at the same time and going into your Task Manager. You can often find programs that are not responding in here, and chose to close them from this utility. Press Clt + Alt + Delete again to reboot your computer from this screen.

**4. Do not unplug peripheral devices while the power is turned on.**

Unplugging devices such as your mouse, keyboard, printer etc with the power on can short out the connector socket or even the motherboard itself. The only time you would unplug something while the power is on, is if the device is hot swappable/pluggable.

If you are unsure if something is hot swappable or not, power down first to play it

safe.

**5. Run virus checks and adware/spyware scans regularly (at least once a week).** There are so many types and variations of viruses, spyware and adware floating around that at times it may seem daunting to even have internet access on your computer. However, regular scans with your virus scanner, and adware scanners, can ensure your computer remains healthy.

**6. Keep your software updated.** Software developers are always writing and releasing patches that update the software you have already bought from them. A lot of these patches fix problems you may be experiencing yourself with a particular program.

**7. Develop a schedule of maintenance practices.** All this advice is meaningless if you keep forgetting to do it, or only remember after something has gone wrong. Write yourself up a maintenance schedule, with a list of what tasks should be performed daily, weekly, and monthly.

If you develop a routine and stick to it, then you should avoid the larger problems by always being on top of the smaller ones!