

Tips & Tricks

Anti-virus

1. Never, ever switch off the resident-protection feature of your anti-virus, even if it decreases the performance of your computer. If the performance decrease is unacceptable, upgrade!
2. Keep your virus definitions up-to-date. Use the auto-update feature of your anti-virus, and don't ignore the "do you want to update now" messages, however often they seem to be popping up.
3. Even if your definitions are regularly updated and you haven't noticed any suspicious activity on your computer, do a thorough system scan at least once a month.
4. Most people skip this step, and then suffer later: always create an emergency boot disk and keep it in a safe place!
5. In some cases, running an anti-virus scan in Safe Mode will allow you to find and kill viruses that would otherwise remain hidden.

Firewalls

6. If you are doing something that requires Net access, allowing the traffic would be necessary. If you are not expecting, or unsure of what is going on, using a search engine will give you an idea of what the program is. Say a.exe is attempting to connect to the Internet. A search on Google will give you an idea of what a.exe is.
7. If you're new to firewalls and you'd like to know how vulnerable your computer is, head to <https://www.grc.com/x/ne.dll?bh0bkyd2> and follow the instructions.
8. A firewall is a powerful tool that requires an understanding of how the program works and what exactly it is doing. Reading the help files is a very big step in the successful configuration of your firewall. There is a learning curve when you use a firewall. Be prepared to spend some time learning how to configure and use it.
9. If you are running a third-party firewall such as Norton, McAfee or ZoneAlarm, be sure to turn off the Windows Firewall.
10. You can temporarily disable a firewall by right-clicking the icon in the tray. This is handy when you know a site is one you can trust but your firewall is blocking it. Be sure to re-enable the firewall as soon as possible.
11. Read firewall notices carefully when they pop up. There are two mistakes you can make, of course, if you don't: let a bad thing in or prevent good traffic.

Anti-Spyware

12. As with anti-virus software, you should check for updates regularly in the case of anti-spyware software as well.

13. Remember to do a scan every now and then, or schedule periodic bi-weekly scans if your program allows it. If you don't want to wait that long for the scan to complete, use a dedicated folder for your Internet downloads, then scan only that folder, the Windows folder, and the Registry. Another option is to use the 'Quick Scan' option if your program has it.

Anti-Spam

14. Be patient with anti-spam software. Don't give up on it if it doesn't seem to be working well enough! It will improve over time.

15. Even after it looks like your anti-spam software has 'learnt' all it needs to learn, you'll still need to check the 'Spam' folder periodically for good mail. No anti-spam solution is perfect (yet).

16 ..Don't supply your anti-spam program with too many rules, such as, for example, telling it that all mail from xyz bank should go into 'spam'. It's better if the software learns from such mails, and it will not learn if you give it the rule.