



# One Good Apple

## How To Keep Your Mac System Running Smoothly

Every computer system needs a good maintenance routine. Even a **Mac**. Apple computers are much easier to use than PC's but this doesn't necessarily mean that you never have to spend any time maintaining them. In fact, if you *don't* spend some time performing preventative maintenance on your iMac or MacBook (or any other model of Mac you may have), you'll more than likely run into problems much quicker than usual. Especially when you begin installing new software.

This document was designed to help you maintain your Mac and get the best possible performance out of it. Included are facts, tips, suggested software utilities and a lot of common sense information based on twenty years of experience working exclusively with Macs.

We hope that **One Good Apple** helps *your* Apple to stay nice and fresh. Just like it was the day you pulled it out of the box and turned it on for the very first time.

And remember, if things go wrong, don't panic. Like we've been saying for years...

***Call us if your Mac is driving you crazy!***



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## Apple's Disk Utility – Your Mac's Best Friend

Look in your Utilities Folder for **Disk Utility**. You can do all sorts of things with it but what we're mostly concerned with right now are your **Disk Permissions**. If you've *never* repaired the permissions on your startup disk before, *repair them now*.

Since Mac OS X is a UNIX-style operating system, every file and folder on your hard disk has an associated set of *permissions* which govern who can open, read, write to or *execute* a particular file or folder. Third-party software installers can often *incorrectly* set permissions on files and folders. We've seen incorrect permissions set on Library folders and even on the entire Applications folder after a software installation (not necessarily with just third-party software but even with *Apple* software). System freezes and forced restarts, along with an assortment of other conditions, can also affect permissions.

Volume corruption can even cause permission problems in Mac OS X. When your permissions are not set correctly, lots of things can go wrong. Unexpected behavior. Slow performance. Applications may not launch properly. Open Disk Utility and select your startup disk from the list on the left. Click on the **Repair Disk Permissions** button. It's harmless and won't hurt your Mac.

If you see a long list of errors before or after you've performed the repair, here is a list of disk permissions straight from Apple which you can *safely ignore*:

<http://support.apple.com/kb/TS1448>

It's **very important** to note that you should *always* repair disk permissions *before* and *after* installing software of any kind. It doesn't take long to do and can save you a lot of headaches.



## Where Are My Startup Disks?

Every new Mac comes with at least one startup disk on DVD labelled **Install DVD**. You wouldn't believe the number of people out there who can't find their startup disks! If you don't know where your startup disks are, **go find them right now** and put them in a *safe place*. A place you will *remember* should that fateful day ever come when you need to use them in order to get yourself out of a bind.

Your Install DVD is the single, **most important disk** in your software collection. When your Mac fails to start up properly (or if it fails to start up at all), this is the disk you will want to use for testing and repair. When you encounter problems such as these, try starting up in **Safe Mode** first (often referred to as **Safe Boot**):

<http://support.apple.com/kb/HT1455>

If Safe Boot works, you more than likely have a problem with a system extension or add-on. If it doesn't work, try starting up from your Install DVD by inserting it into your computer and restarting while holding down the "C" key on your keyboard.

<http://support.apple.com/kb/HT2956>

When your computer starts up from the Install DVD, **never** click *Continue* in the first screen of the Installer. Always choose *Disk Utility* from the *Installer* menu at the top of the screen and once Disk Utility appears (it may take a while), click the *First Aid* tab. Select your Mac OS X volume from the list on the left and click the **Repair Disk** button. Let Disk Utility check and repair your disk.

If all goes well, you should be able to quit out of Disk Utility, quit the Installer and restart your Mac and begin using it again. If you have no success, call us to request a service call.

**Note:** Never install a version of Mac OS X *earlier* than the one which came with your Mac.



## Managing Your Cache Flow

Caches transparently store data on your computer so that future requests for the same data can be served faster. There are lots of different caches on your computer with the most well-known cache being your **browser cache**. How many times have you ever cleared the cache in your copy of Safari or Firefox? Probably many times.

Almost all applications have their own caches and **Cache Corruption** can lead to big problems on a Mac. System or application crashes can cause corruption. Restarting a frozen or hung system using the power button on your Mac can also cause cache problems and a defective or failing hard drive can be the worst culprit.

As part of your routine maintenance plan, we recommend using a **Cache Cleaning Utility** on a regular basis. Do this *once a month*. If you're planning on installing a large software package such as a Mac OS X System Software Upgrade or Update, an Adobe software package or a Microsoft software package on your computer, clean your caches *first* before installing your new software. After you've done this, remember to repair the **disk permissions** on your startup disk (see page 1).

We've used two different Cache Cleaning Utilities over the years with excellent results. Both of these software utilities are free but the developers have put a lot of time and effort into them and ask for a donation. Donating ensures that future development and updates will continue. If you make good use of them, please be sure to donate:

### OnyX

<http://www.titanium.free.fr/>

### YASU

<http://www.jimmitchell.org/yasu/>



## Not So Fantastic

One bad font can ruin your entire day. It's true. It's a problem which has plagued graphic designers, desktop publishers and even the average home user since the days of System 6. They can be a nightmare to diagnose. Sometimes, involving the painstaking removal of one font at a time from your system – performing the whole process by trial and error.

Bad fonts can cause applications to crash big-time. You might see all sorts of error messages in the **Console**. Corrupt or damaged fonts, font ID conflicts and duplicate fonts – they all contribute to slowing your system down to a crawl and creating the worst havoc you could possibly imagine. Frustrating, indeed.

Before you start tinkering around and removing fonts from all sorts of different folders, be *careful!* Your Mac OS X system software requires that certain fonts be installed in certain locations. For example, if you remove the “dfont” **LucidaGrande**, your system may not even boot. And keep in mind that computer crashes, hard drive problems and other operating system problems can corrupt your fonts. Since your fonts are always “open” in the event of a crash, this makes them particularly susceptible to corruption.

Take control of your fonts with **FontDoctor**. It will diagnose and repair all sorts of font problems and even help you to organize your fonts (especially for those of you who have *lots* of them). It's well-designed and very easy to use. We've used it ourselves for years.

### Understanding Fonts

<http://support.apple.com/kb/HT2435>

### FontDoctor

<http://www.fontgear.net/fontdoctor.html>



## Backing Up Is Hard To Do

We go to great lengths in order to prevent problems from happening but there's always the *unexpected factor*. This is where you need to think *seriously* about a good backup system. We recommend a **dual-backup** system. Two external hard drives in case one fails. We've seen it happen many times before. Just when you think you have all of your bases covered, you turn to that trusty old backup drive and find out that it wasn't trusty at all. It's corrupted. If you had a *second* hard drive to fall back on, you'd be on your way.

We can supply you with reliable **LaCie** external backup drives to accomplish this task. With Apple's excellent **Time Machine** software running in the background, backing your computer system up every hour, you'll *always* have a recent backup to rely upon.

And with **Carbon Copy Cloner**, you'll be able to make a *bootable clone* of your entire hard drive on your *second* backup drive in case of a failure.

Make sure you have **two drives** for a backup strategy. Not just one.

**Note:** Keep an eye on the capacity of your internal and external hard drives. Try not to fill your drives up to the "brim". We recommend leaving at least thirty to forty percent of free space on a hard drive for the best performance and the least amount of problems.

### LaCie Canada

<http://www.lacie.com/ca/>

### Apple Time Machine

<http://www.apple.com/ca/findouthow/mac/#timemachinebasics>

### Carbon Copy Cloner (CCC)

<http://www.bombich.com/>



## Cheap RAM, Even Cheaper Performance

Everyone wants to upgrade the memory (RAM) in their Mac at some point. We see so many people make the mistake of hunting high and low for that “best possible deal” and buying the cheapest RAM they can find. **Don't do that!**

There *is* a difference between the different memory manufacturers. A **huge** difference. And there are a lot of manufacturers out there to choose from.

We've been using **Kingston Memory Upgrades** for over twenty years. In all this time, we've had *one single memory module* which was defective. Just one. That's a pretty good track record, don't you think?

Bad RAM (cheap RAM) can cause major problems that are sometimes very subtle and other times, very noticeable. These problems can be very cunning and difficult to pinpoint since they can mimic other problems such as system software-related problems and even hard drive problems.

Sudden crashing and freezing are the two biggest red lights. They happen out of nowhere – for no rhyme nor reason – until you finally yank the defective memory modules out of your Mac and replace them with **quality** modules. Only then do you realize the price you can sometimes pay for cutting corners.

We can supply you with a *quality*, Kingston Memory Upgrade – for any model of Mac ever made. They may cost more than that memory sold by “clearing houses” on the Internet but they're worth every penny.

You paid good money for your Mac. Make sure you do the same with your memory upgrade.

### **Kingston System-Specific Memory**

[http://www.kingston.com/us/memory/system\\_specific](http://www.kingston.com/us/memory/system_specific)



## About Zaps, SMU's and SMC's

A number of problems can often be resolved by **zapping the PRAM** (Parameter RAM) on your Mac. This is also known as *resetting the Parameter RAM*. Your Mac stores certain settings in a special memory area even when your computer is turned off. On Intel-based Macs, this area is known as **NVRAM**. On PowerPC-based Macs, this area is simply known as **PRAM**. If your Mac is running sluggish and just plain old “ugly”, you might want to do a “zap”. As noted with repairing disk permissions on page 2, zapping is also harmless and won't hurt your Mac. To do this, simply restart your Mac while holding down the command, option, “P” and “R” keys.

### Resetting Your Mac's PRAM And NVRAM

<http://support.apple.com/kb/HT1379>

You may have heard of the terms SMC (System Management Controller) and SMU (System Management Unit) before.

The SMC in an Intel-based Mac is responsible for many low-level functions. Resetting it can restore battery management, thermal management and response to presses of the power button along with many other “glitches” you may encounter from time to time. Resetting the SMU on a PowerPC-based Mac can resolve computer issues such as the computer not starting up, not displaying video, sleep issues and excessive fan noise.

Here's how to reset your SMC or SMU:

### Reset SMC (Intel-based Mac)

Note that certain Intel-based Macs may require different reset methods

<http://support.apple.com/kb/HT3964>

### Reset SMU (PowerPC-based Mac)

Note that certain PowerPC-based Macs may require different reset methods

<http://support.apple.com/kb/HT1436>



## When Up To Date Isn't Always Up To Snuff

We're very strong advocates of keeping your software **up to date**. But the one thing you *never* want to do is update or upgrade to that "latest and greatest" version of software too *quickly or too hastily*. Especially when it comes to *system software*.

Always wait for a while before updating or upgrading. Why? Because far too often, an update can cause more problems that it was designed to solve. Take iLife '11 for example. Millions of people upgraded from iLife '09 to iLife '11 only to be extremely disappointed with the results (search the Internet for feedback on iLife '11 and you'll see what we mean). It took Apple months to resolve all the problems people were encountering with iPhoto version 9 (confusing, yes – iPhoto version 9 is actually the version included with iLife '11). It wasn't until iPhoto **9.2.1** was finally released when all of the problems were sorted out.

Our advice is to **wait a good week or two** after a software update or upgrade has been released. Research the software on the Internet *first* and *review the feedback* to see what people are saying. Once you see enough *positive feedback*, then go ahead and update or upgrade.

For system software, we recommend opening **System Preferences** and clicking on the **Software Update Control Panel**. Look for *Download Updates Automatically* and *un-check* the box to the left of it so that your computer doesn't try to automatically update itself when you're not looking. Do it all *manually* instead.

On the topic of system software updates, you'll have fewer problems by downloading a **Combo Updater** directly from Apple's website and installing it *manually* rather than using the Software Update Control Panel built into your computer's system software.

Don't be afraid to update your software. Just be *careful*. A little bit of wisdom and a lot of patience can go a long, long way in keeping your Mac as healthy as can be.



## Hardware, Software, MALWARE

Don't ever think for one moment that Macs are immune to viruses. Granted, there are far fewer viruses for Macs than there are for PC's. In fact, there are almost *none*. But that doesn't mean that there *won't* be a nasty virus on the horizon, especially with so many people buying Macs these days. Apple announced its highest quarterly revenue and earnings in the company's history on January 24th, 2012 - a quarterly revenue of 46.33 billion dollars, a quarterly net profit of 13.06 billion dollars and **5.2 million Macs sold**. Who said "no one uses Macs"?

Take the *proactive approach* and get ready for when it happens. And also keep in mind that there is plenty of **malware** floating around out there for Macs right now. Trojans masquerading as installers. Play it safe and always download from *trusted sources*.

One of the best things you can do right now is to *be prepared*. There's no better solution available than the completely *free* **Sophos Anti-Virus For Mac Home Edition**. It's the most well-designed, unobtrusive anti-virus software we've ever used on Macs. Its virus definitions are updated every day and the company actually *listens* to Mac users, making their product better and better with each and every update.

Download it today, install it on your Mac and you'll have peace of mind. It'll catch any malware that the kids may have "accidentally" downloaded while you were out and it'll also protect you when that day we're all dreading happens to arrive. The day when the first *real virus* for Mac OS X hits us.

That day *will* come. Probably much sooner than later.

### Internet Security

<http://www.mwconsulting.ca/blog/internet-security.html>

### Sophos Anti-Virus for Mac Home Edition

<http://www.sophos.com/en-us/products/free-tools/sophos-antivirus-for-mac-home-edition.aspx>



## Take Care Of That Apple With AppleCare

Every Apple product you purchase comes with a complimentary, **one-year warranty** with **ninety days** of free technical support by telephone. Those ninety days run out real fast and before you know it, your one-year warranty is up. What happens when a hard drive fails or an LCD or LED display fails 367 days after you bought your computer? You reach for your wallet and pay a fortune to have the components replaced.

Here's where an **AppleCare Protection Plan** can help. We've *always* purchased an AppleCare Protection Plan for every Apple product we've ever owned.

With desktop Macs, your hardware warranty and free technical support period are extended to *three years*. For devices such as the iPod and iPhone and other products such as the iPad and Apple TV, your hardware warranty and free technical support period are extended to *two years*.

When you see what the cost of replacement parts is from our angle, it makes no sense at all to let your one-year warranty run out and then have to pay a thousand dollars for a screen replacement in a MacBook Pro. The cost of an AppleCare Protection Plan is *far less* than the cost of paying for replacement parts out of your own pocket.

The best example we can give you is an Apple Display which failed *thirteen months* after it was purchased. Our customer didn't purchase an AppleCare Protection plan and had to purchase a brand new display. She was none too pleased and of course, "it was all our fault". But we did our best to convince her to purchase an AppleCare Protection Plan when she purchased her Mac and her display. She declined.

Take care of your Apple and "get with the plan" today.

### AppleCare Protection Plan

<http://www.apple.com/ca/support/products/>



## The Mac Toolkit – Not Available At Your Hardware Store

Here are some software utility **gems** to add to your “Mac Toolkit” if you don’t already have one. Each of these little morsels can help to keep your Mac running smoothly. We use them all ourselves:

### **Preferential Treatment\***

Check your preference files for corruption

<http://www.jonn8.com/>

### **Carbon Copy Cloner (CCC)\***

Use CCC to make a bootable backup of your hard drive (see page 6)

<http://www.bombich.com/>

### **OnyX\***

An excellent Cache Cleaning Utility (see page 4)

<http://www.titanium.free.fr/>

### **YASU\***

Another excellent Cache Cleaning Utility (see page 4)

<http://www.jimmitchell.org/yasu/>

### **FontDoctor\*\***

Industry standard software for font problem diagnosis, repair and organization (see page 5)

<http://www.fontgear.net/fontdoctor.html>

### **Sophos Anti-Virus for Mac Home Edition**

The best Mac anti-virus application for Macs (see page 10)

<http://www.sophos.com/en-us/products/free-tools/sophos-antivirus-for-mac-home-edition.aspx>

\* Indicates a free software utility with a donation request  
\*\* Indicates a retail software version for purchase