

THIS & THAT

by
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I trust your Holidays were pleasant and fun. We had lots of family and friends stop by. It's a great time of year. But now it's time to think about the New Year. By the way before I get into things here, I wish you and yours the very happiest of New Years!

Did I mention that I grew up in the north? You know, that place where two minutes of falling snow turns into days of dirty slush and ice. We came to Georgia, this little bit of heaven, from the Chicago area. You'd think after living up there, I would like...maybe even love winter. NOT! Winter makes me feel brittle. No one wants to feel brittle.

Sooo, I do everything I can to pass this season's days oblivious to brittle. One way I found works for me is to think Spring. That's when the days get longer, the temperature edges up, and nature awakes from its hibernation. Flowers and leaves burst forth in anticipation of all the wonderful days ahead. Ah yes, it's a glorious time of year and a scant ten weeks or so away (just a bit of optimism there).

Even the thought of spring cleaning can't dampen my spirits. And, spring cleaning includes (here it comes guys, duck) cleaning your computer. Well it does.

Put your harsh soap and water away for

this job. You can cause more harm than good if you use them.

Let's begin with the monitor. There are two types: CRT (the big heavy TV type monitors, and LCD (flat panel monitors). Methods for cleaning the viewing areas differ between them. I swiped the following from About.com. Tim Fisher says it best when he suggests the following:

Flat screen monitors, also known as LCD monitors, are a little different than their CRT cousins when it comes to cleaning. Your standard CRT monitor has a glass screen and be cleaned in pretty much the same way as you would any other glass in your home or office.

Flat screen monitors, however, require a bit of special care when cleaning. Their displays are much more sensitive and are easily scratched and damaged.

CLEANING PROCEDURE

1. Turn off the monitor. If the screen is dark, it will be easier to see the areas that are dirty or oily.
2. Use a dry, soft cloth and very gently wipe the screen. A great choice would be the microfiber type of cloth used to clean eyeglasses. See Tip #1 below for kinds of cloths to avoid.
3. If the dry cloth did not completely remove the dirt or oil, do not press harder in an attempt to scrub it off. Pushing directly on the LCD screen can often cause pixels to burn out.
4. If necessary, dampen the cloth with distilled water or with an equal ratio of distilled water to white vinegar. See Tip #2 below for products to avoid.
5. Many companies also sell small spray

bottles of special cleaner for flat screen monitors but the vinegar mixture is usually just as effective.

6. The plastic edge that surrounds the screen can be cleaned with any multipurpose cleaner but take care to avoid contact with the screen itself.

Tips:

1. Avoid using paper towels, toilet paper, tissue paper, or something like your shirt to wipe the LCD screen. These non-ultrasoft materials can easily scratch the screen.
2. Avoid cleaning products that contain ammonia, ethyl alcohol, acetone, toluene, ethyl acid, or methyl chloride. These chemicals can react with the materials that the LCD screen is made of which could yellow the screen or cause other kinds of damage.
3. Never spray liquid directly on the LCD screen or it could run inside the monitor and cause damage.

There are commercial products available to help in this process. I include a web site that sells this kind of stuff. I'm not necessarily endorsing these products, but you can get an idea of what to look for by viewing Photodon's web site:

<http://www.photodon.com/csc.htm>

KEYBOARD

Keyboards present another challenge. Here again soap and water are taboo.

Ehow.com

(http://www.ehow.com/how_2026_clean-computer-keyboard.html) offers the following:

1. Purchase any supplies you need: compressed air (in an aerosol can); a soft

rag; Endust for Electronics, or any nonabrasive household cleaning fluid suitable for cleaning plastic; and a dust mask if you're allergic to dust.

2. Check your owner's manual. If the manufacturer has provided specific instructions, follow them.
3. Shut down the computer.
4. Disconnect the keyboard.
5. Use compressed air to clean between the keys. Spray at an angle to dislodge dust and grime.
6. Shake loose dust gently out of the keyboard.
7. If using Endust for Electronics or another aerosol cleaning fluid, follow the manufacturer's instructions. Otherwise, spray a small amount of fluid onto a rag.
8. Wipe the keys and chassis.
9. Wait until the keyboard is dry before reconnecting it to the computer.
10. Reconnect the keyboard and restart the computer.

Do not spray fluids directly onto the keyboard.

COMPUTER

The following comes from:

<http://www.computercleaningguide.com>

Make sure your computer is turned off before you begin the cleaning process!

Cleaning the Computer Case

1. Turn off and unplug the computer.
2. Dampen a cloth or paper towel with a mild cleaning agent and wipe down the case, Don't put too much liquid on the cloth where it might drip through any openings and into the inside of the computer.

Cleaning the Inside of The Computer

1. Turn off and unplug the computer.

2. Remove the casing of the computer (directions should be in your computer manual). It is recommended that you bring the computer outside at this point because in the next step there'll be a lot of dust coming out of your computer.
3. Use the can of air to clean out the dust from the vents and the fan in the back of the computer.
4. Use a can of air to blow the dust out of the computer going in one direction while using short bursts of air (you want to clean all the circuit boards, underneath the motherboard, the bottom of the case, get rid of dust on any of your drives and blow air into the power supply box). You want to try to get as much dust out of the computer as you can, if there is dust on the inside of the case you should try to get that out of there as well. Try to avoid any direct physical contact with any circuits in the computer.
5. Put the case back on.

THINK SPRING!!!!