

Print Page 1 on the front and Page 2 on the back of a piece of paper (just pull it out of the printer's output tray and put it in the input the opposite way). Keep this near your computer for when it doesn't work.

I spilled my drink on my keyboard!

1. Immediately turn the keyboard upside down somewhere where you can clean up the mess. It's a lot easier to clean up a mess on the floor or desk than inside your keyboard.
2. Unplug the keyboard if it isn't wireless.
3. Take the keyboard to the sink, fill a glass of water, and dump it right on top of your original spill. You need to clean off whatever goo might now be inside. If you just spilled plain water, no need.
4. Turn the keyboard upside down again to get the water out.
5. Put out a towel and prop the keyboard against it at an angle so the water and junk can still run out. Leave it for a few hours.
6. Plug the keyboard back in and restart. If it works, great! If it doesn't or it has a rough action, then proceed. If you have a cheapie keyboard that came with your computer, don't bother. Throw it away and buy a good one or take someone else's cheapie keyboard that they're not using.
7. Take all the screws off the back of the keyboard (after unplugging it again, of course). Clean up whatever mess you can see inside. If you absolutely have to, take off all the keys too. Pry each key GENTLY off; be careful not to break any, especially larger keys. First, take a picture of the keyboard so you know where to put the keys!
8. If it still doesn't work, you won't be able to make it. Throw it out and buy a new one.

DON'T EVER clean your keyboard by immersing it in water! That is about the one sure way to destroy it.

My computer does nothing when I hit the power button!

1. Since you have started reading this sheet, I'm going to assume you already made sure it's plugged in, the power strip is turned on, the power switch on the back of your system (if there is one) is turned on, and you have power. Double-check just to make sure.
2. Well, that fixes about 99% of all problems like this. If you're still reading, go find your circuit breaker or fuse box (hope you know where it is) and make sure all the switches are ON. If one is tripped, you probably tried to run too many things on the same circuit at once. Pull the switch to OFF and then back on again; your computer should work now.
3. If a circuit isn't tripped or it was but it still doesn't work, unplug your computer from the power strip and plug it straight into the wall. If it works now, there was probably a surge or overload. Look for a "Reset" button on the power strip. If there is none or it doesn't help, get a new power strip. The fuse that catches surges must have blown.
4. If you STILL can't get it to work, you're having bad luck. Find a knowledgeable friend to help you out. Even if your computer broke from a power surge or something, you can likely still save your data.

I went to a webpage and it seems to be taking over my computer!

1. Use the fastest method you have to cut the power. If you have data that absolutely MUST be saved, do that first, but if it's something you can recover, don't bother. You shouldn't waste time.
2. Go find "I think I have a virus!"

I just got a Blue Screen of Death (BSOD)!

1. Don't panic. Your computer isn't destroyed forever.
2. Write down the sorta-English description at the top (like ATTEMPTED_WRITE_TO_READONLY_MEMORY) and the numbers after STOP at the bottom (like 0x0000001F). That's right, use a sheet of paper and a pen.
3. Restart. Push the reset button if you have one; otherwise tap the power button and it should go off.
4. If you get another BSOD on bootup, first be sure it's the same one. Then call someone who's a better troubleshooter than you to help. Better have a working computer to look up the error code first! You can get a lot of information out of that little 0x number you wrote down using Google!
5. If you don't get another one for a good while, it's probably just a random incident. Every computer blue-screens sometimes. Don't worry about it. If it starts to happen a lot, you need to do something about it.

My computer is continually rebooting every time I start!

All that's happening is you're getting a Blue Screen of Death, but your computer is programmed to reboot when it gets one.

1. When your computer reboots the next time, start tapping F8 every couple of seconds. It's above your 9 and 0 keys.
2. When you get an "Advanced Boot Options" page, select "Disable Automatic Restart on System Failure".
3. In a moment, you should be able to see the Blue Screen of Death. Follow the directions in "I just got a BSOD!"

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I think I have a virus!

1. Don't reboot unless you absolutely have to. Some viruses only do something after a reboot.
2. If you aren't using antivirus software, kick yourself and then go buy some or download a free trial from the Internet.
3. If you are or you just installed some, update the definitions from the Internet (using LiveUpdate, Signature Update, or some similar option).
4. Do a full scan of your computer. If nothing shows up, you probably don't actually have a virus.
5. If something shows up, follow the directions to remove it.
6. Delete all your System Restore points. In XP, press Windows+Break (the Windows key is the one with a flag), choose the System Restore tab, and uncheck something to the effect of "Use System Restore." Click Apply, then recheck it and click OK. In Vista, press Windows+Break, click the "Advanced System Settings" link on the left, click Continue in the security prompt, click the System Protection tab, and uncheck all the boxes. Click Apply, recheck whichever boxes were checked before, and hit Apply again. Leave this dialog box open.
7. Create a new restore point since you now don't have any. In XP, choose Start → All Programs → Accessories → System Tools → System Restore. Click "Create a new restore point" and follow the prompts. In Vista, click Create in the dialog box you left open. Type a description as asked and click OK.

A program won't close and clicking End Task doesn't do anything!

1. In Task Manager (press Ctrl-Shift-Esc or Ctrl-Alt-Delete), right-click the program that won't end.
2. Choose Go To Process from the menu that appears.
3. You will be abruptly switched to the Processes tab. Click End Process.
4. Tell the computer that you do understand that ending a process may, what is it, "have undesirable effects" or "cause system instability". Tell it that you think your system could hardly get less stable than it already is (or click Yes).
5. 99% of the time, the program will be zapped immediately. If the computer still runs a bit shaky, log off (Start → Log Off) and log back on again to clear things up.

Everything's just running really slow suddenly and I can't even seem to open the Start menu to restart!

1. Save any unsaved data in programs.
2. In Windows XP, press Ctrl-Alt-Delete to open Task Manager and open the Shut Down menu.
3. While holding down the Ctrl key, click Restart. Wait a moment and it should restart.
4. There doesn't seem to be a good equivalent in Vista. You can try pushing Windows-R (Windows is the flag key) and typing *shutdown -f -r -t 00* (could it be any more cryptic?).
5. Both these methods should not be used normally, as they are more forceful than the normal shutdown, but they're more effective if things aren't working right.

My monitor, computer, or something else is buzzing or whining and it's driving me insane!

1. Find a good flat surface on the device that's solid and not fragile (like the side of most computer cases).
2. Give it a couple of good whacks (really).
3. If it keeps happening, make sure the device isn't touching anything but what it's sitting on and nothing's loose on it.
4. If you want to sound technical sometime, talk about this technique, called "percussive maintenance."

My mouse stopped working or it's moving erratically!

1. Turn the mouse over. If there's a big rubber ball, unplug the mouse from the computer, remove the ring around the ball (there should be an arrow showing which way to turn it), and take the ball out. Clean the mess inside there.
2. If you don't see a big rubber ball, you have an optical mouse, which uses a camera to take pictures many times a second to determine how the mouse is moving. (See how many people can tell you exactly how an optical mouse works.)
3. If there's a light on the bottom, find where the mouse plugs in and unplug it. If you have a wireless mouse, find the receiver and unplug that. If there's no light or a very dim light and it's a wireless mouse, change the batteries.
4. Wait a few seconds and plug the mouse back in.
5. If it still doesn't work, restart the computer. This final step fixes the problem almost every time.