

Spring-Clean you Tech

How to clean, maintain and declutter your devices

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- **Introduction**

- How to safely clean your tech — laptops, phones, TVs, printers, accessories — and how to tidy up digital clutter inside your devices.
- Practical, everyday stuff you can do at home with simple tools like microfibre cloths and a bit of care.
- The aim is to help your devices last longer, run better, and stay hygienic.

- **Why Cleaning Matters**

- Phones carry *thousands of microbes*
- Dust, grime and skin cells build up
- Dirt can: reduce performance, shorten lifespan, cause overheating
- Ports and buttons can stop working.

A study found more than 2,000 microbes on everyday phones, most harmless, but still a reminder of how much grime builds up.

Dust and dirt don't just look messy; they block vents, trap heat, and interfere with charging ports and buttons.

Cleaning isn't just cosmetic; it genuinely helps your tech work better and last longer.

Cleaning Computers

- **Laptop Screens: Do & Don't**

- **Do:**

- Switch off and unplug
 - Use a dry microfibre cloth
 - Lightly dampen cloth with water or approved cleaner.
 - Wipe gently

- **Don't:**

- Use glass cleaners
 - Spray liquid directly
 - Press hard on the screen.

Laptop screens are delicate.

Glass cleaners can strip protective coatings.

Always dampen the cloth - never the screen - because liquid can seep into the edges.

Gentle pressure is key so think “polishing a pair of glasses,” not “scrubbing a saucepan.”

Cleaning Computers

- **Keyboard, Touchpad & Case**
 - Turn laptop upside down and tap
 - Brush between keys
 - Clean keys with 70%+ isopropyl alcohol
 - Use mild soap solution for casing
 - Avoid wetting ports or speaker grilles.

Keyboards collect oils, crumbs, and bacteria.

A gentle tap removes loose debris. Isopropyl alcohol evaporates quickly, so it's safe for keys, but keep the cloth only slightly damp.

For the casing, a tiny drop of washing-up liquid helps remove fingerprints without damaging finishes.

Cleaning Computers

- **Ports, Grilles & Vents**

- Use torch to inspect
- Remove debris with wooden toothpick
- Never use metal tools
- Don't blow into ports
- Avoid compressed air.

Ports often get blocked with lint from pockets or bags.

Wooden or plastic tools are safe because they won't scratch connectors.

Compressed air can push dust deeper inside especially risky for laptops with internal fans.

Blocked vents cause overheating, which slows performance and increases fan noise.

Cleaning Computers

- **Desktop PCs**

- Same principles as laptops
- Keep vents clear
- Clean monitor like laptop screens
- Always unplug first.

Desktops don't get handled as much, but they still gather dust especially around vents. Monitors should be cleaned exactly like laptop screens: dry cloth first, then lightly dampened cloth if needed. Always unplug everything before cleaning.

Cleaning Phones and Tablets

- **Everyday Cleaning**

- Switch off and unplug
- Remove case
- Use microfibre cloth
- Lightly dampen if needed
- Clean camera lenses carefully
- Check charging port.

Phones go everywhere — kitchens, bathrooms, buses — so they pick up grime quickly. Camera lenses are especially important: even tiny smears reduce photo quality. Charging ports often collect lint; removing it gently can fix charging issues.

Cleaning Phones and Tablets

- **Disinfecting Safely**

- **Allowed:**

- 70% isopropyl wipes occasionally
 - Follow with slightly damp cloth

- **Avoid:**

- Bleach, ammonia, window sprays
 - Abrasive wipes
 - Submerging device
 - Ultraviolet C gadgets.

- *UV-C is a short-wavelength, high-energy band of the electromagnetic spectrum used for sterilisation. It damages the DNA and RNA of microorganisms and acts as a highly effective germicide to disinfect air, water, and surfaces in hospitals, labs and HVAC systems.*

Manufacturers now accept that people want to disinfect devices, but harsh chemicals damage coatings. Isopropyl wipes are fine occasionally but don't overuse them.

UV-C gadgets vary wildly in effectiveness and aren't recommended by major brands.

Cleaning Phones and Tablets

- **Cleaning Cases**

- Silicone/plastic: wash with mild soapy water
- Leather: wipe only
- Tablet keyboards: clean like laptop keyboards.

Cases often collect more grime than the phone itself. Silicone cases can be washed, but leather needs gentle care.

Always let cases dry completely before refitting as moisture trapped inside can damage your device.

Cleaning TVs

- **TV Screens**

- Switch off, unplug, cool down
- Use dry microfibre cloth
- Lightly dampen cloth if needed
- Never spray liquid directly
- Avoid harsh cleaners.

TV screens are surprisingly delicate. Cooling down prevents streaks and reduces risk of damage. Water is usually enough but avoid anything with alcohol or ammonia.

Cleaning TVs

- **Vents, Ports & Rear Panels**

- Wipe dust with dry cloth
- Avoid compressed air
- Don't use vacuum cleaners
- Check ports gently.

*Dust around vents causes overheating, which shortens lifespan. Vacuum cleaners can generate static electricity and are risky for electronics.
Ports should be cleaned gently, just like phones.*

Cleaning Printers

- **Everyday Printer Cleaning**

- Switch off and unplug
- Wipe exterior
- Lightly damp cloth for smears
- Avoid alcohol/thinners
- Clean paper trays.

Printers collect dust and paper fibres.

Paper trays often cause misfeeds when dusty.

Some manufacturers warn against alcohol so always check your manual.

Cleaning Printers

- **Cleaning Inside**

- Only clean visible dust
- Use dry cloth
- Don't dismantle printer
- Avoid tissues
- Don't touch print heads.

Internal cleaning should be minimal.

Tissues shed fibres that cause jams.

Inkjet print heads are delicate and touching them can cause expensive damage.

Cleaning Printers

- **Built-In Cleaning Tools**

- Inkjet: nozzle check, print-head clean, deep clean, alignment
- Laser: drum clean, calibration.

These tools fix issues like streaks or missing colours.

They use ink or toner, so run them sparingly.

Always run a test page first as it shows whether cleaning is needed.

Internal cleaning should be minimal.

Accessories

- **Keyboards & Mice**

- Unplug or remove batteries
- Clean like laptop keyboards
- Damp cloth for mouse
- Cotton bud for scroll wheel
- Clean underside sensor.

*Accessories get handled constantly, so they collect oils and grime.
Scroll wheels often clog with dead skin and a cotton bud works well.
Optical sensors need to be kept clean for accurate tracking.*

Accessories

- **Headphones & Earbuds**

- Wipe external surfaces
- Wash silicone tips
- Wipe foam tips
- Use toothpick gently
- Avoid pushing debris inside.

Earbuds can harbour bacteria and earwax.

Cleaning improves hygiene and sound quality.

Be gentle around speaker grilles as they're easy to damage.

Accessories

- **Chargers & Cables**

- Unplug before cleaning
- Wipe with dry/damp cloth
- Check for damage
- Replace damaged cables.

*Cables get dragged around floors, bags and sockets.
Cracks or fraying are dangerous and pose a risk of fire or shock.
Replacing damaged cables is essential.*

Other Tech

- **Other Devices to Clean**

- Routers
- Smart speakers
- Smart home devices
- Ebook readers
- Games consoles
- Controllers & remotes.

Many household gadgets quietly collect dust.

Routers and consoles especially suffer from blocked vents.

Smart cameras need clean lenses for clear images.

Controllers get sticky buttons and cleaning restores responsiveness.

Digital Spring Cleaning

- **PC Storage Cleanup**

- Empty Recycle Bin
- Delete temporary files
- Uninstall unused apps
- Use Windows Storage settings
 - Settings → System → Storage → Temporary files
 - Settings → System → Storage → Cleanup recommendations.

*Digital clutter slows computers and prevents updates.
Windows and Mac both have built-in tools to help.
Temporary files can take up gigabytes of space.*

Digital Spring Cleaning

- **Phone & Tablet Storage**

- **iPhone/iPad:**

- iPhone Storage

- Delete or offload apps

- Review media

- **Android:**

- Settings → Storage

- Manage apps via Play Store.

Phones fill up quickly with photos, videos and apps.

iPhones show a colour-coded bar - very helpful for beginners.

Android devices vary, but the principles are the same.

Digital Spring Cleaning

- **Final Tips**

- Clean gently and regularly
- Avoid harsh chemicals
- Keep vents clear
- Check cables
- Declutter storage.

None of this requires special equipment, regular gentle cleaning prevents most problems.



Questions?