

PC MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

Keep your PC fast, cool and gaming-ready all year round

FixMyGames.in

■ Monthly

■ Every 3 Months

■ Every 6-12 Months

■ Dust & Physical Cleaning

- Open case and blow out dust with compressed air

Pay extra attention to heatsinks, GPU fans and PSU vents — these clog fastest.

- Clean CPU cooler fins and fan blades

Clogged cooler fins are the #1 cause of thermal throttling in gaming PCs.

- Wipe down GPU heatsink and fans

Use a soft brush first, then short bursts of compressed air.

- Clean all case intake and exhaust fans

Dusty fans lose airflow efficiency noticeably within a single month.

- Check and clean PSU fan from exterior only — never open PSU

- Replace or clean dust filters on case panels

Magnetic filters take 30 seconds under a tap. Worth doing every month.

- Clean monitor screen with a microfibre cloth

Never paper towels — they scratch anti-glare coatings.

- Clean keyboard with compressed air and IPA wipe

- Wipe mouse feet and sensor window

Dirty sensor windows cause cursor stuttering — quick IPA wipe fixes it.

- Re-apply thermal paste on CPU

Stock paste degrades. I consistently saw 5-8C drops after repasting at 12 months.

- Re-apply thermal paste on GPU if temps are high

GPU temps above 90C at stock clocks usually mean dried-out paste.

■ Temperature & Cooling

- Check CPU temps under load using HWiNFO64 or CoreTemp

Safe gaming range: under 85C. Above 90C means clean or repaste immediately.

- Check GPU temps under load with MSI Afterburner

Most GPUs throttle at 83-90C. Keep it under 80C for best performance.

- Verify all case fans are spinning at correct RPM

A dead fan you do not know about can silently raise temps by 10C.

- Review fan curves in BIOS or fan control software

Aggressive fan curves after a clean = cooler PC without buying anything.

- Check CPU cooler mounting — ensure no wobble or movement

A loose cooler causes hot spots. I have seen 15C differences from one loose screw.

- Ensure GPU has at least 3-4cm clearance from case floor

■ Storage Health

- Run CrystalDiskInfo and check SSD/HDD health status

Look for Good status. Any Caution or reallocated sectors — back up immediately.

- Check SSD free space — keep at least 15-20% free

SSDs slow down significantly when near full. Easiest performance fix there is.

- Run Disk Cleanup and delete temp files

Windows temp files and update caches can quietly eat 10-20GB.

- Empty Recycle Bin and clear Downloads folder

- Run SMART test on HDDs

HDDs older than 3 years: run extended SMART test every 3 months without fail.

- Check for SSD firmware updates from manufacturer site

Samsung, WD and Crucial release firmware that improves longevity and fixes bugs.

- Defragment HDDs only — never defrag an SSD, it wears them out

■ Software & Windows Maintenance

- Run Windows Update and install all pending updates

- Update GPU drivers via GeForce Experience or AMD Adrenalin

Outdated GPU drivers cause more game crashes than most people realise.

- Update chipset, audio and network drivers

Chipset drivers affect PCIe bandwidth and RAM speed directly.

- Scan for malware with Malwarebytes free version

Background crypto miners are often mistaken for hardware problems.

- Review startup programs in Task Manager and disable unneeded ones

I found 17 startup items on a clients PC adding 40 seconds to boot time.

- Uninstall programs you no longer use

- Run SFC /scannow in Command Prompt as Administrator

Fixes corrupted Windows files that cause crashes and random slowdowns.

- Check Windows Event Viewer for critical and error entries

Recurring critical errors almost always precede a BSOD or crash.

- Verify Windows Page File is set to System Managed

Too-small manual page file settings cause random game crashes.

- Fresh install Windows

After 12-18 months a clean install gives back more performance than any tweak.

■ RAM & Performance

- Check RAM usage at idle in Task Manager

Idle RAM above 50% with nothing open — find and kill the culprit app.

- Ensure XMP/EXPO is enabled in BIOS

Most PCs ship at 2133MHz. XMP enables the rated speed e.g. 3600MHz — free performance.

- Run Windows Memory Diagnostic or MemTest86 if crashes occur

Faulty RAM causes BSODs that look exactly like driver or OS problems.

- Reseat RAM sticks if system is unstable

I have fixed dead-looking PCs by reseating RAM alone. Takes 2 minutes.

■ Network & Gaming Connectivity

- Power cycle your router and modem fully

Router memory fills up over time. Monthly power cycle keeps latency stable.

- Check for packet loss at fixmygames.in/packet-loss-test/

Even 1-2% packet loss causes rubber-banding, lag and hit registration failures.

- Update router firmware via its admin panel

- Clean dust from router vents — routers overheat too

An overheating router drops connections randomly, especially in summer.

- Check ethernet cables for damage and replace any crimped cables

A damaged cable caused 30% packet loss for one user — it looked fine visually.

- Switch from Wi-Fi to ethernet cable if ping is unstable

Ethernet eliminates wireless interference completely.

■ Backups & Data Safety

- Back up game saves to cloud — Steam Cloud, GOG or manual copy

Lost 40 hours of progress to a dead HDD once. Never again.

- Back up important documents to external drive or cloud

- Create a Windows System Restore point before any major changes

Takes 2 minutes and has saved me from botched driver installs more times than I can count.

- Image your Windows drive with Macrium Reflect free edition

Full disk image means recovery in 20 minutes instead of a 2-hour reinstall.