

Carry your laptop in a protective case, or bag, free from any potentially harmful substances.

- Computers should be carried in a bag with lots of padding and protection.
- Alternatively, you can purchase a laptop sleeve to protect your computer. Models with padding inside and a hard shell are preferred.
- Don't place food, drink, or other potentially harmful substances nearby, or in a bag with your computer, as liquid spills are all too common and often come with a heavy price tag.
- Be sure to include accident protection in your warranty, if you are concerned about accidental damage or spills.

Always power down your laptop before moving it and at night.

- The hard drive, where your data is stored is a series of spinning discs with a read/write head. Thus, transporting or moving your laptop while powered on can cause corruption to the hard drive.
- To avoid long boot-up times, you can also put your computer into Sleep, Stand-by, or Hibernate modes.
- Shutting down your computer (or putting it in Sleep or Hibernate) will also extend the life of the hardware.

Take care with the screen and keyboard

- The laptop's compact design means sensitive components must be stored directly below the keyboard.
- Avoid slamming or punching down on the keys with excessive force, as this may damage the components underneath.
- The LCD screen is also sensitive, so avoid poking the screen too hard, or placing heavy objects on top of your laptop.

Back up your data regularly and back up important files to multiple locations

- Hard drive failure is difficult to predict and may even occur within the first few months of computer ownership.

Keep the laptop on a flat surface when in use and avoid blocking air vents.

- Blocking air vents will cause the computer to operate above the normal operating temperature range, which over time will decrease the lifespan of your computer.
- Avoid using your computer in a particularly dusty area.
- Consider purchasing a compressed “air” canister and blowing out the dust from the vents.

Install Antivirus Software, keep it updated, and perform scans regularly

- Be sure to install Antivirus Software. Your computer may come with a free trial of another antivirus, but we strongly encourage uninstalling the trial version, provided and installing something more permanent like the one provided by Auburn University (<http://auburn.edu/software>).
- Keep the software updated by setting your Antivirus to check daily for updates.

Set strong passwords

- Be sure to set a strong password for your username, using numbers, letters, and capitals.

Update Windows/OS X regularly

- To have the best patches and security updates available, be sure to regularly update your computer.

Keep track of your software CD/DVDs and license keys

- Never discard the Windows, Office, or other discs that come with your computer, these can be invaluable in getting your computer running fast.
- Keep all official documents, receipts, and license keys for your software, which are needed if the software must be reinstalled.

Delete unwanted programs and files, and avoid installing lots of 'extras'

- In Windows, there are many flashy programs that run in the background of your computer (usually showing up as little icons in the task bar e.g. Weather-Bug). Use 'Add/Remove programs' in Control Panel to move these programs or any others not in use.
- In OS X, be sure to remove unwanted programs from your 'Applications' folder.
- Empty your Recycling Bin or Trash.
- Delete old files from your desktop or documents folders.
- Remove any excess user accounts that may be taking up space.

Avoid P2P software

- P2P programs often come bundled with adware or spyware.
- P2P downloads can sometime be bogus files and may contain viruses.