Introduction

By the end of this lesson, learners should be able to:

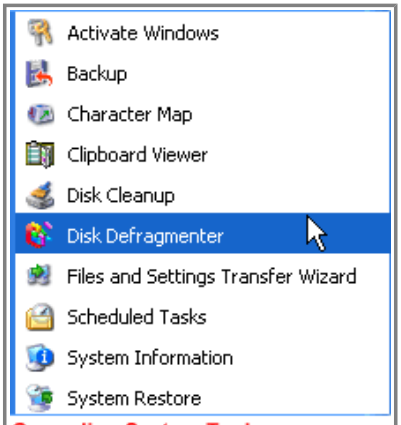
- Define System Tools
- Run Disk Defragmenter
- Run Disk Cleanup
- Open the Scheduled Task Wizard
- Deal with an unresponsive computer

What are System Tools?

Do some basic maintenance from time to time to keep Windows XP running smoothly. Luckily, Windows XP provides you with some basic tools to make the maintenance process as painless as possible. You can access these tools via the **System Tools menu**.

To open the System Tools menu:

1. Choose **Start** → **All Programs** → **Accessories** → **System Tools**.
2. A cascading **System Tools** menu opens.



Cascading System Tools menu

Disk Defragmenter

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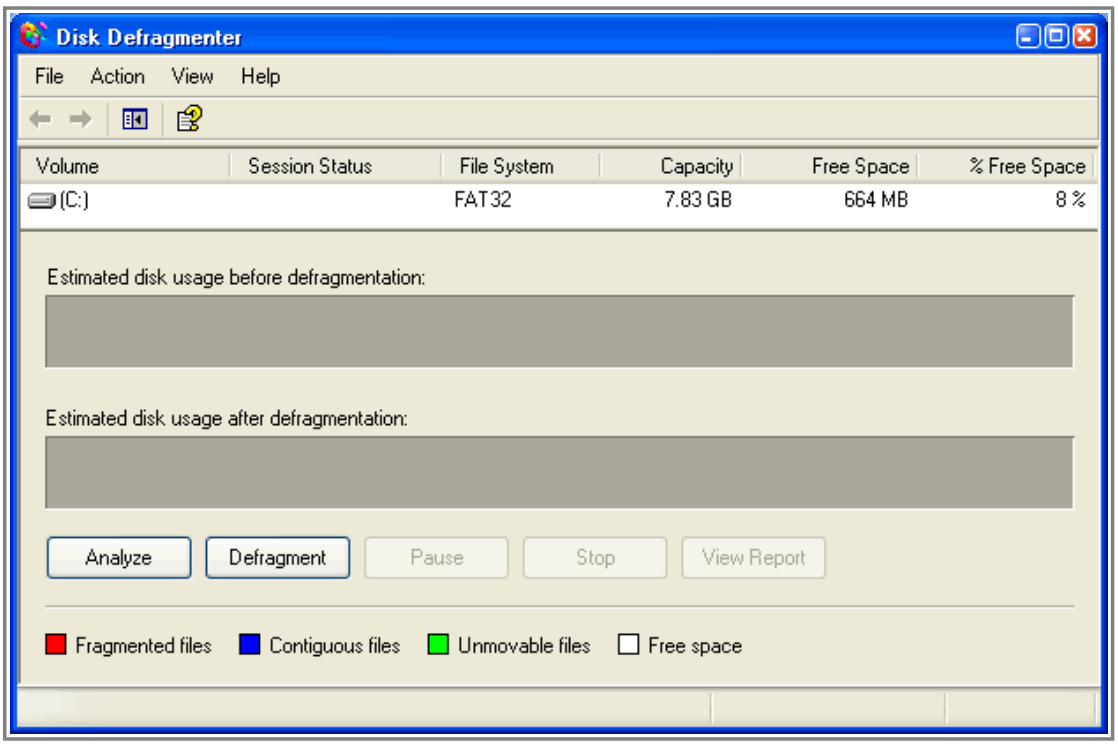
All Windows XP computers have at least one **hard disk**. The hard disk acts as your computer's storage area. Almost everything installed on your computer - applications, files, folders, and operating system - is stored here.

With general use, (creating new files, deleting files, installing new software, etc) your hard disk can become **fragmented**. This means that parts of the same disk file become scattered over different areas of the disk. A fragmented hard disk slows down your computer and hinders its performance.

To keep your hard disk running smoothly, you must routinely **defragment or "defrag"** the hard disk. The **Disk Defragmenter** tool can help you do this.

To use Disk Defragmenter:

1. Choose **Start** → **All Programs** → **Accessories** → **System Tools** → **Disk Defragmenter**.
2. The **Disk Defragmenter** opens.



To open Microsoft Management Console:

1. Open **Disk Defragmenter**.
2. Open the **Action** menu.
3. Click **Help**.
4. A **Microsoft Management Console** opens and explains how to run **Disk Defragmenter**.

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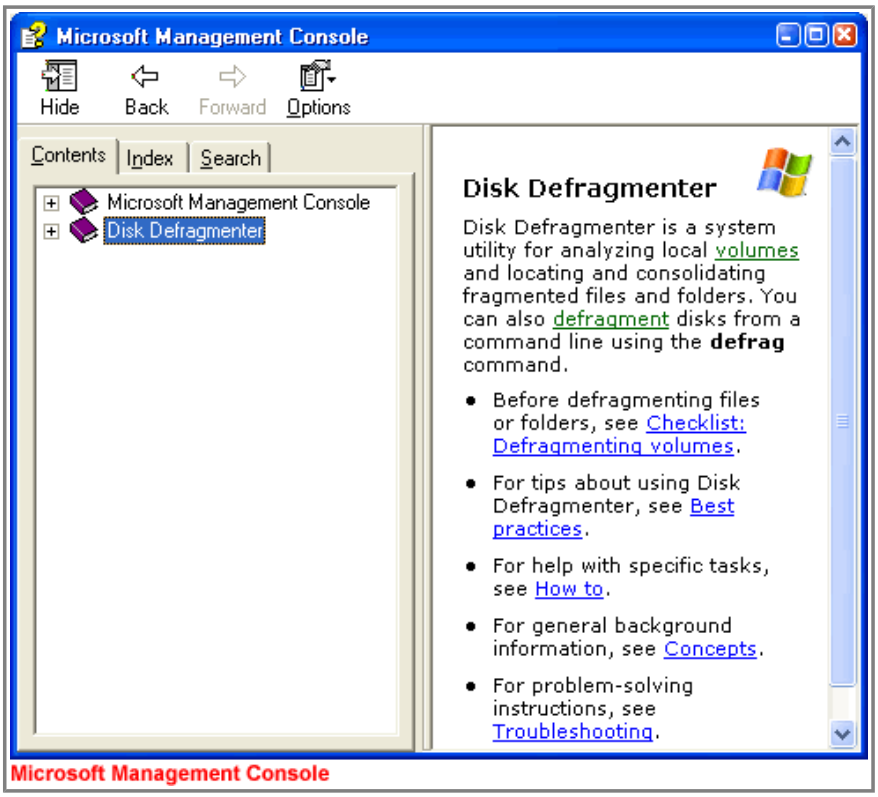

Note: You may need to be logged in as an administrator or as a member of the Administrators group to perform some tasks associated with the Disk Defragmenter. Disk Defragmenter should be run every three months.

Disk Cleanup

Disk Cleanup is another tool that helps keep Windows XP operating as it should. It inspects your hard disk and looks for files that can be safely deleted. Deleting unnecessary files frees up valuable disk space.

To run Disk Cleanup:

1. Choose **Start** → **All Programs** → **Accessories** → **System Tools** → **Disk Cleanup**.
2. The **Disk Cleanup** window opens. Click the Disk Cleanup tab if it's not showing.
3. Disk Cleanup lists several potential files that can be deleted and the amount of disk space you'll gain by emptying each one.
4. To learn more about a file category, click it and click the **View Files** button. A description appears.
5. Click the **checkboxes** next to the categories you want to **delete** and click OK.
6. A dialog box appears, stating, **"Are you are sure you want to perform these actions?"** Click Yes or No as appropriate.

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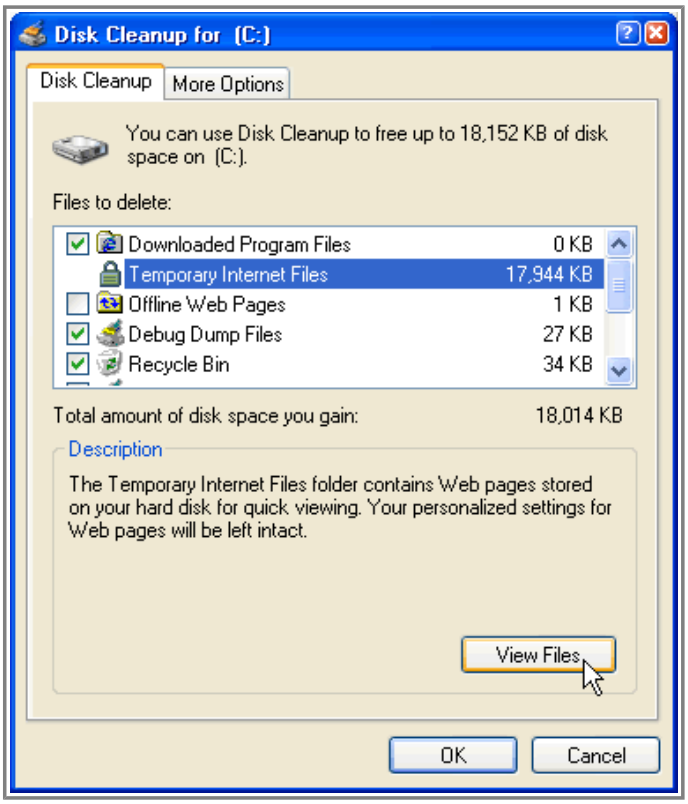

Disk Cleanup (Continued)

The **More Options tab** gives you even more disk cleanup options.

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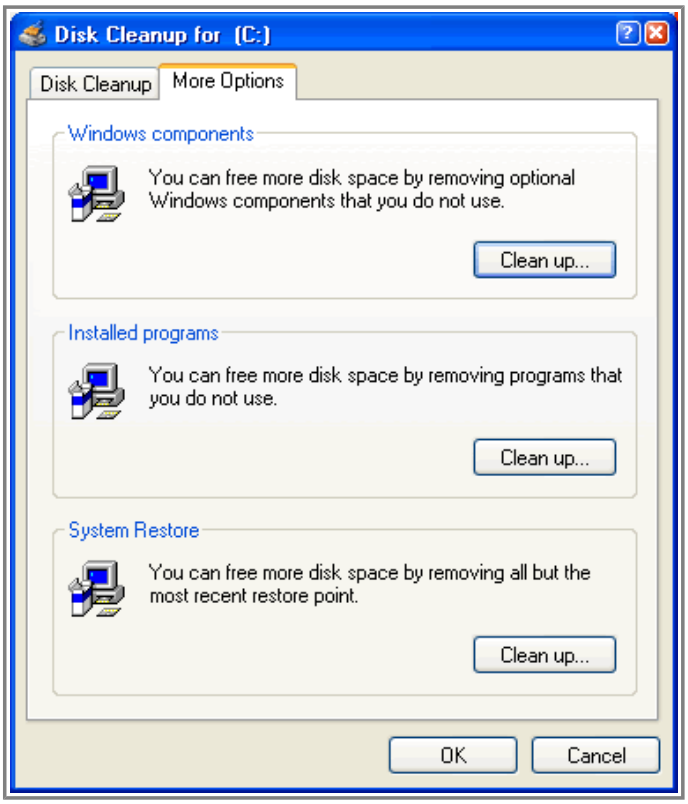

Note: It's recommended that you run Disk Cleanup every three months.

The Scheduled Task Wizard

Fortunately, you don't need to remember to run each of these utilities. Windows XP includes a Scheduled Task Wizard that runs each of them for you.

To open the Scheduled Task Wizard:

- Choose **Start** → **All Programs** → **Accessories** → **System Tools** → **Scheduled Tasks**.

OR

1. Choose **Start** → **Control Panel** → **Performance and Maintenance** → **Scheduled Tasks**.
2. The **Scheduled Tasks** folder opens.
3. Double-click **Add a Scheduled Task**.
4. The **Scheduled Tasks Wizard** opens.
5. Keep clicking **Next** to select the program(s) you want Windows to run. If the task you want is not listed, click the **Browse** button to locate it. Then schedule a convenient time.

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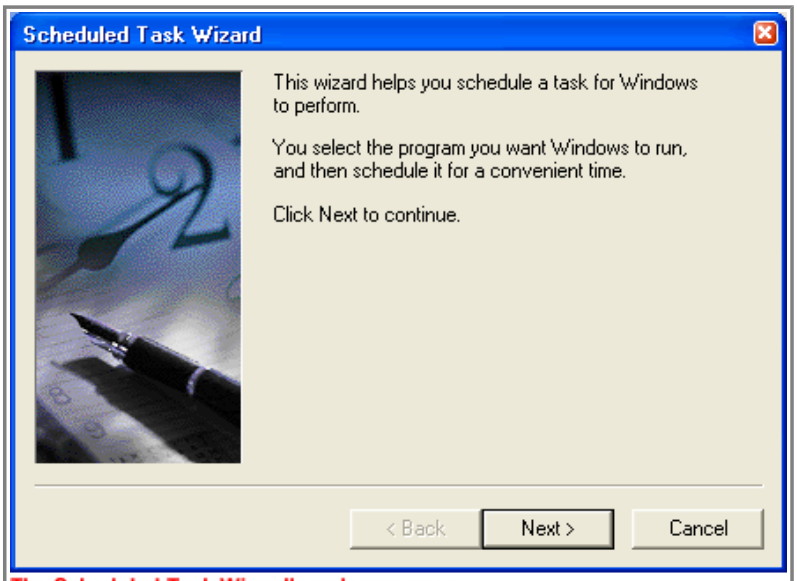

The Scheduled Task Wizard's welcome page

Dealing with an Unresponsive Computer

While doing regular maintenance on your computer should keep it running smoothly, your computer may occasionally freeze up or become unresponsive to the click of a mouse or keyboard.

- If your computer freezes, **try waiting it out**. Sometimes it takes your computer a few seconds to complete a task.

OR

- Press the **ESC** on your keyboard.

OR

- Press **Ctrl + Alt + Delete** on your keyboard. The **Windows Task Manager** opens. Here, monitor applications, processes, performance, networking, and users. If you need to restart your computer, choose **Shut Down → Restart**. If you need to turn off your computer, choose **Shut Down → Turn Off**.

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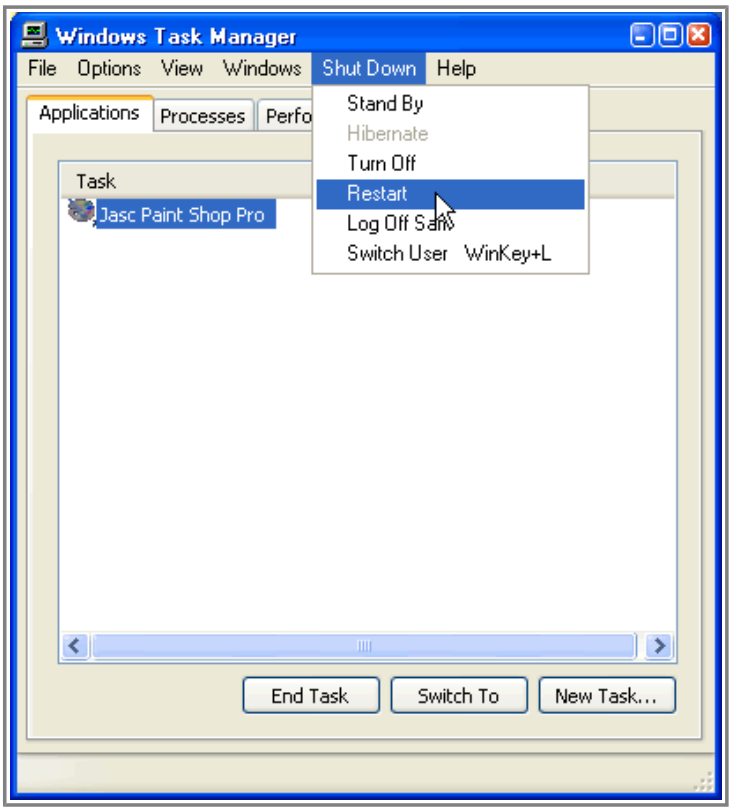

Challenge!

- Locate the System Tools menu.
- Open the Disk Defragmenter. Open the Action menu. Click Help. Learn more about running Disk Defragmenter.
- Open Disk Cleanup. Run Disk Cleanup if necessary in order to free up hard disk space.

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