Computer

Software
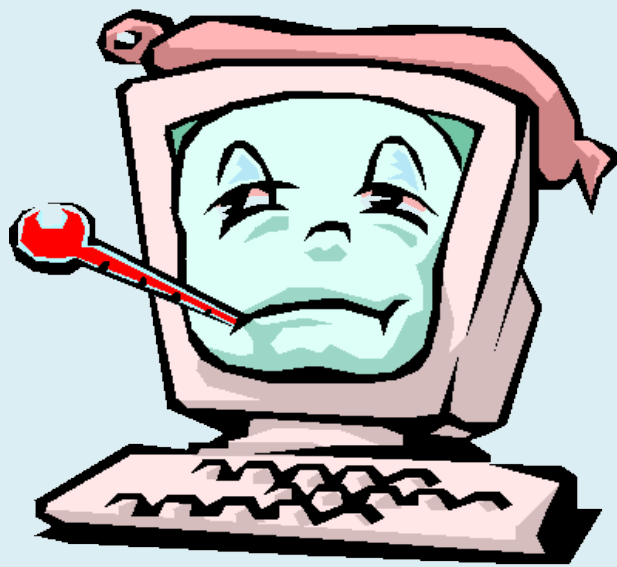
Maintenance

& Prevention

☑ **Checklist**

YES, IT'S NECESSARY

Welcome to Your Computer Health Checklist

Is your computer frequently neglected in its requirements for regular maintenance? Just like a vehicle it requires regular attention to keep it running smoothly. Many users fail to understand this simple fact or have very little information on what is necessary.

The No. 1 reason consumers replace their computers – short of a complete system failure – is that their current computer is too slow or suffers from poor performance, according to a recent Harris Interactive poll.

If you've noticed a decline in your PC's performance, and you are using your computer for about the same amount of time and for the same tasks that you did when you purchased it, there are simple and free procedures to try before you head out for a replacement.

The following pages will serve as your checklist of what you must do to help avoid those often annoying problems and events which can result in a sometime costly visit to the computer technician.

Beware...
If you neglect your maintenance obligation you are open to slower performance, more errors, greater risks of virus and malware, corruption of vital programs and basic operations. Maybe even resulting in a trip to your favourite technician.
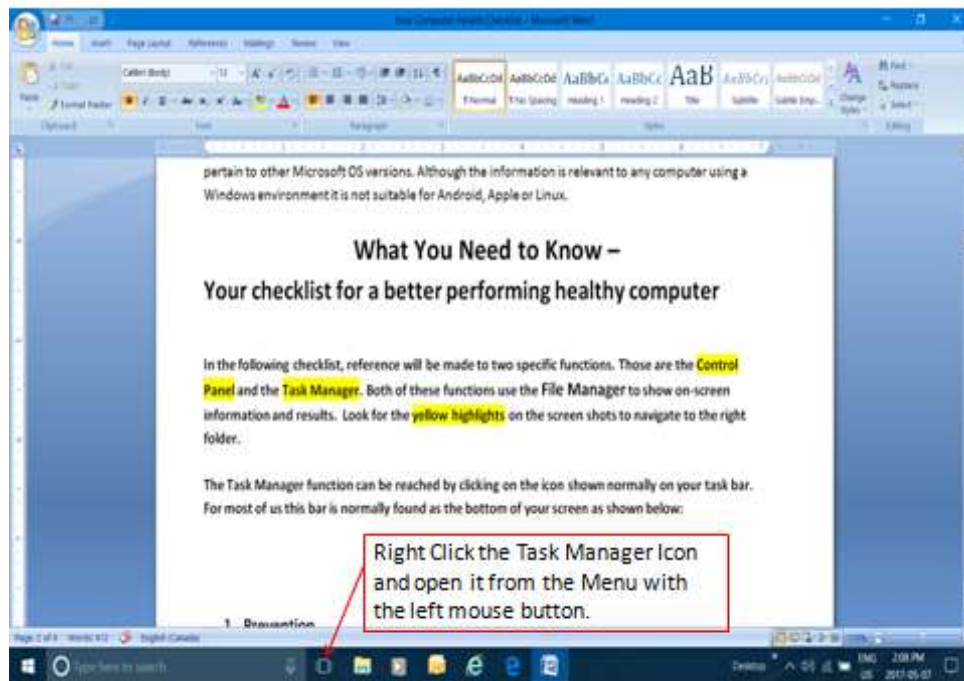
All references in this ✅Checklist are for the Windows 10 OS (operating system) but the general principles pertain to other Microsoft OS versions. Although the information is relevant to any computer using a modern Windows environment it is not suitable for Android, Apple or Linux.

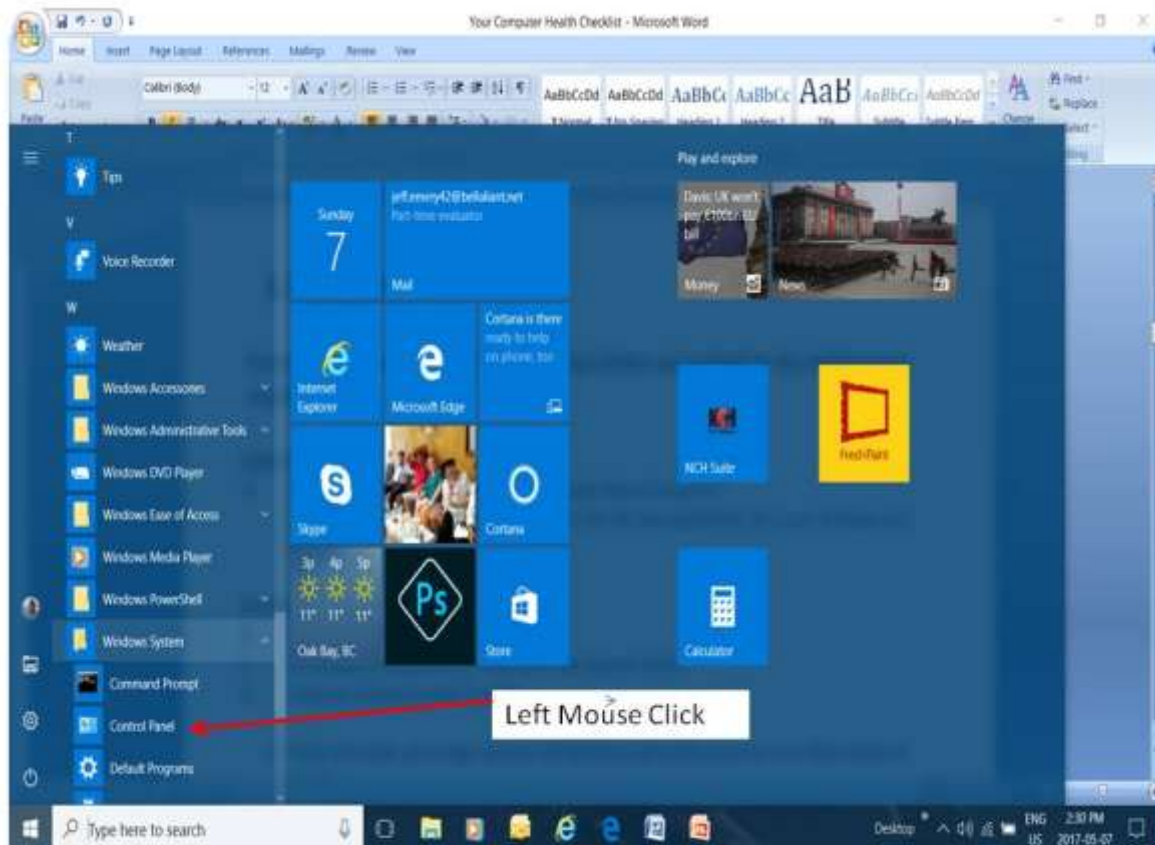# What You Need to Know First –

Your ☑Checklist for a better performing healthy computer

In the following ✅Checklist, reference will be made to two specific functions. Those are the Control Panel and the Task Manager. Both of these functions use the **File Manager** to show on-screen information and results. Look for the yellow highlights on the screen shots to help you navigate.
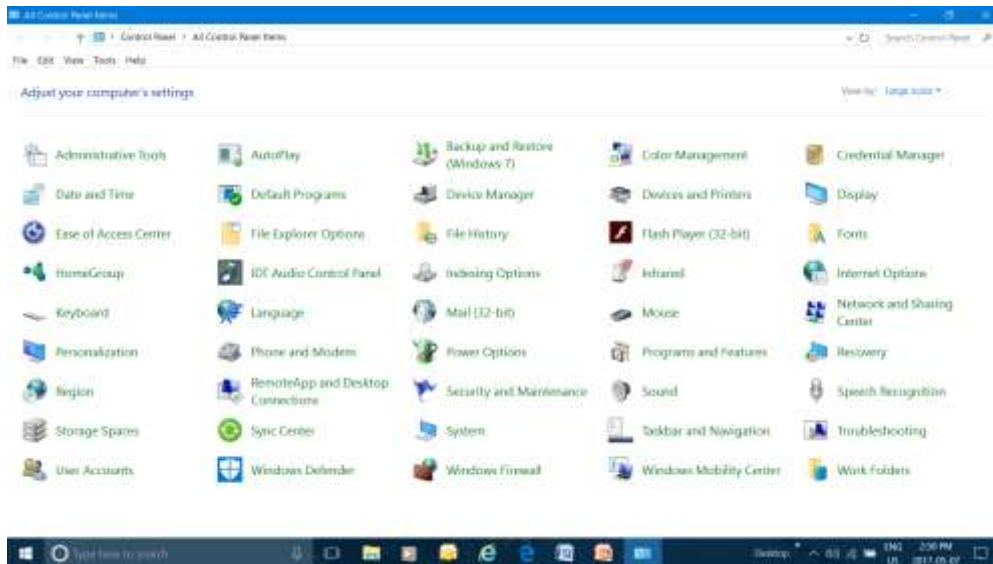
The **Task Manager** suite of functions can be reached by RIGHT clicking on the icon shown normally on your task bar. For most of us this bar is normally found at the bottom of your screen as shown here on the next page:

Right Click the Task Manager Icon and open it from the Menu with the left mouse button.

The **Control Panel** function can be accessed by clicking on the Windows symbol on the bottom left side of the screen and selecting the Control Panel from the left hand applications menu. It is under "W" for Windows System. *EASY WAY - or you can just use the right mouse button on the Windows symbol and select the Control Panel from the menu.*

Left Mouse Click

And then you see this >>>

You may have a slightly different view depending on the VIEW you currently have selected. You might have bigger Icons or just a group listing. You can change that view by clicking on the View table on the menu.

1. ✔️ Prevention

Consider these next points as necessary steps before you embark on the Maintenance ✔️ Checklist tasks:
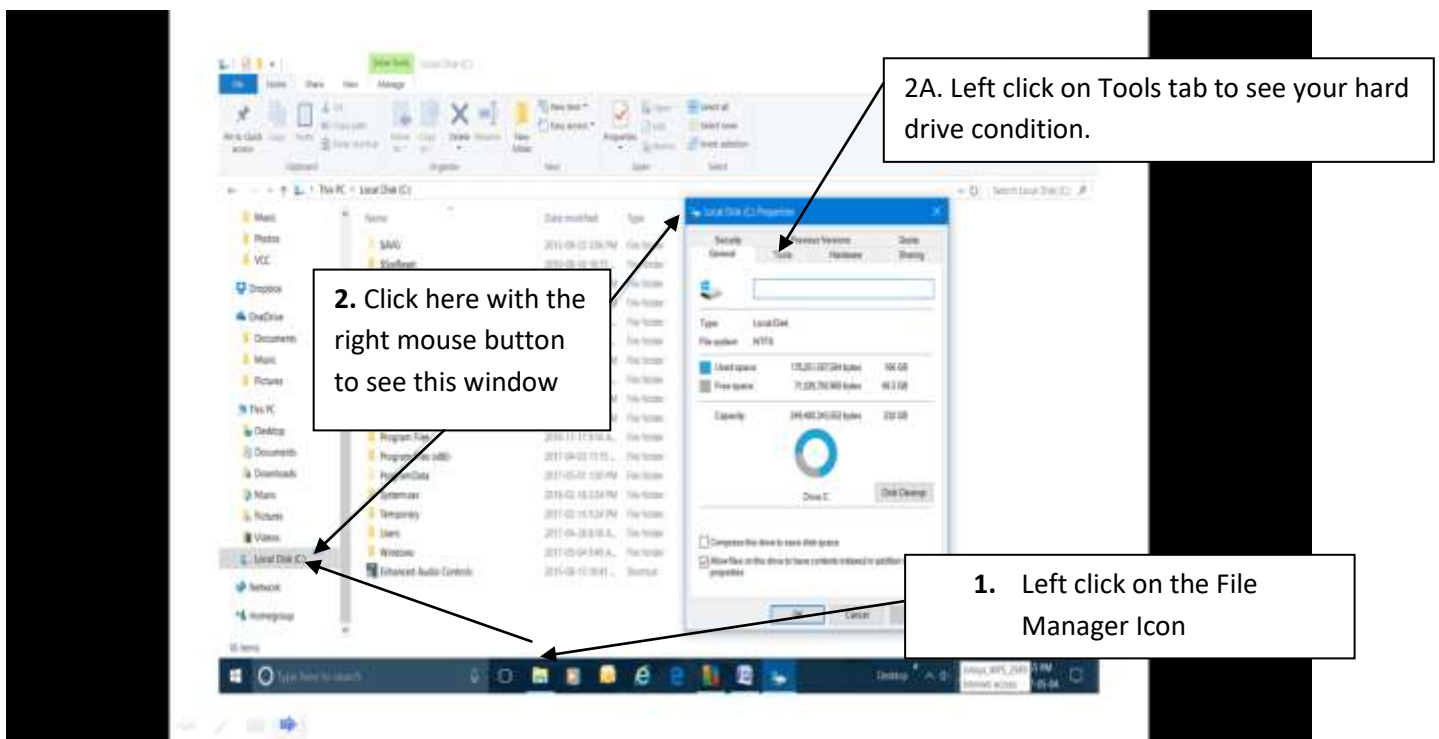
Updates

✔️ A.   Do you have the automatic Windows OS software update feature turned on?

(go to Start Menu and select **Settings** ⚙️ > **Update & security** > **Windows Update** . If you want to check for updates manually, select **Check for updates.**

✔️ **B.   Hard Drive Health**

1.   What capacity (space) do you have left? *Here you will use the* File Manager *Icon on the Task Bar*
2.   What is the condition of your hard drive?

(See diagram below)

2A. Left click on Tools tab to see your hard drive condition.

2. Click here with the right mouse button to see this window

1.   Left click on the File Manager Icon

Do keep at least 10-15% of your drive free so Windows can do its work. Any less and it will slow your system

✔️ C.   Have you a backup system in place?

- At the very least, use a larger capacity USB flashdrive, (thumbdrive) to copy your documents and photos.
- Upload those same documents and photos to the Internet (cloud drive) such as: Onedrive, Dropbox, Google Drive or similar. Consider backing up your email and your Windows system with a program such as Macriem Reflect : (https://www.macrium.com/reflectfree)

✔ D. Are you protected for Viruses, Malware, & PUPS (Possibly Unruly Programs)?

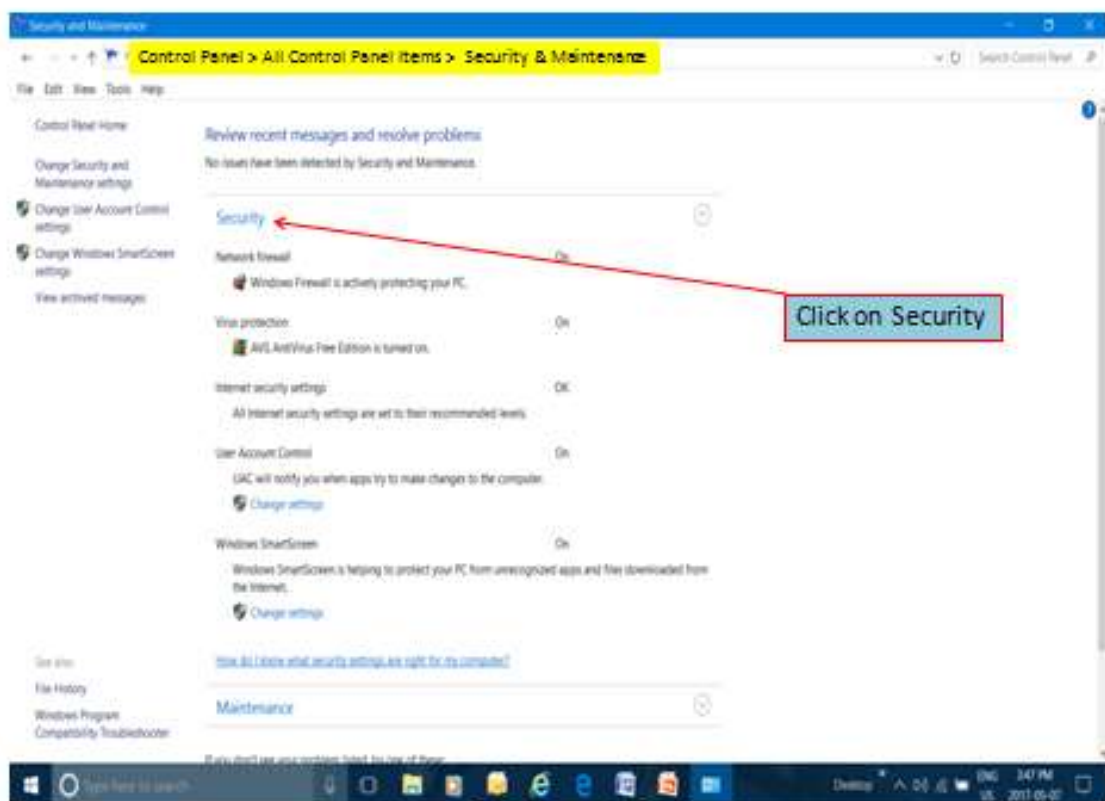Windows Defender is not as good as many of the popular Virus & Malware offerings.

Consider programs such as AVG, Avast or Jaspersky. Visit the link below to select your choice: (http://download.cnet.com/s/security-antivirus/windows/)

Do a full system virus scan – Double-check that your antivirus program is up-to-date with the latest virus definitions and perform a full-system scan to verify that your system is still clear of any trojans, viruses, or other malware.

✔ E. Is your firewall turned on?
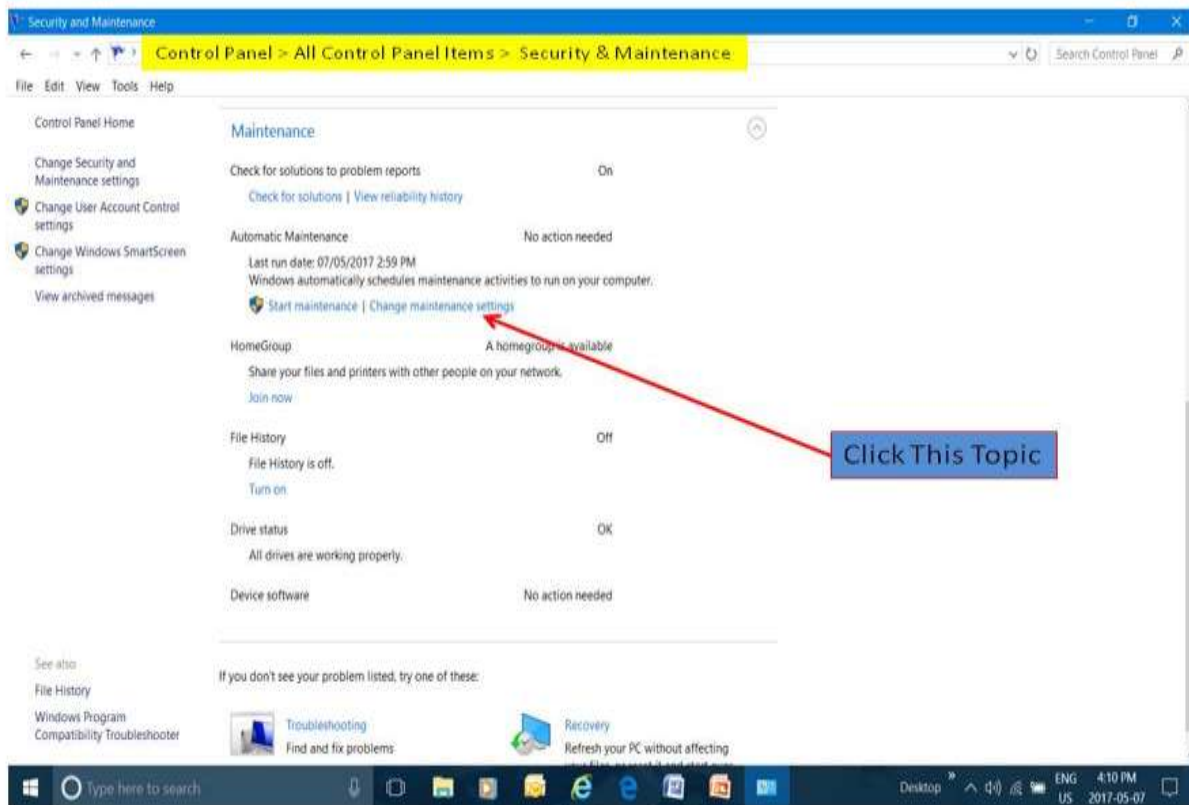
Follow the yellow highlights on the screen below>

Your prevention can include other actions which can be found in the Addendum of this ✔Checklist

1. ✅ Maintenance

✓ A. Are you running Windows Automatic maintenance?
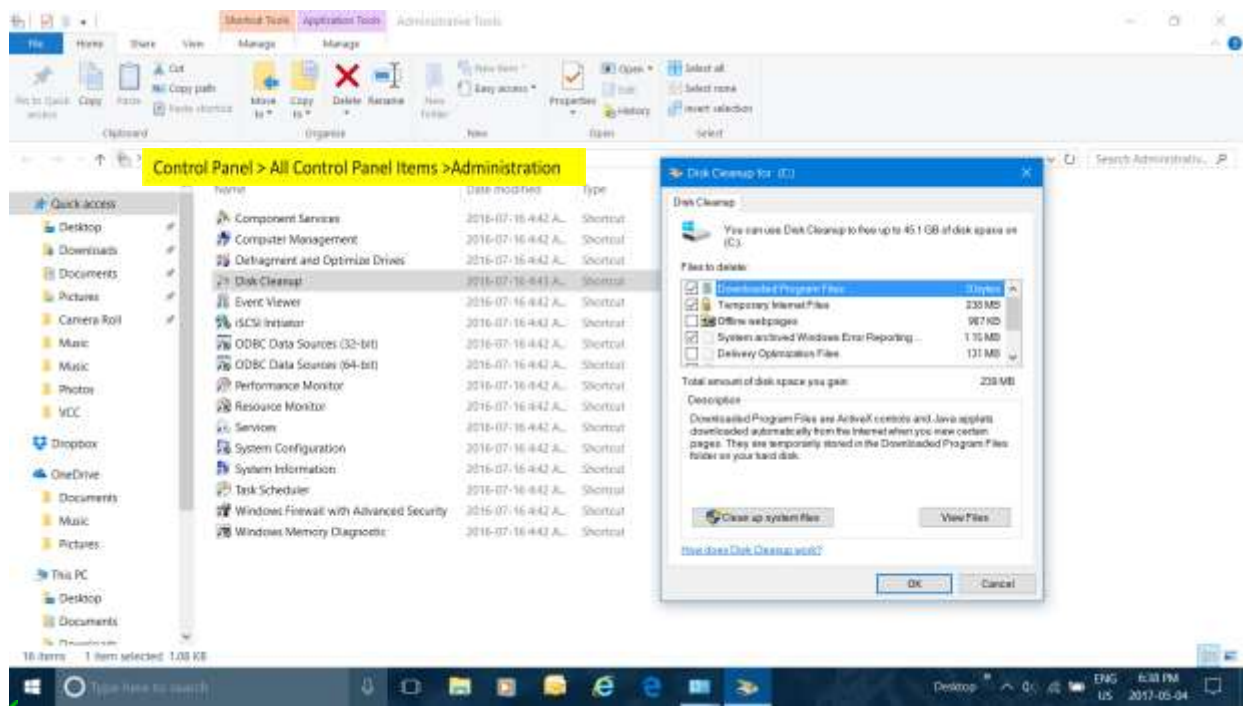
(It is automatic in Windows 10 but you can select some options)
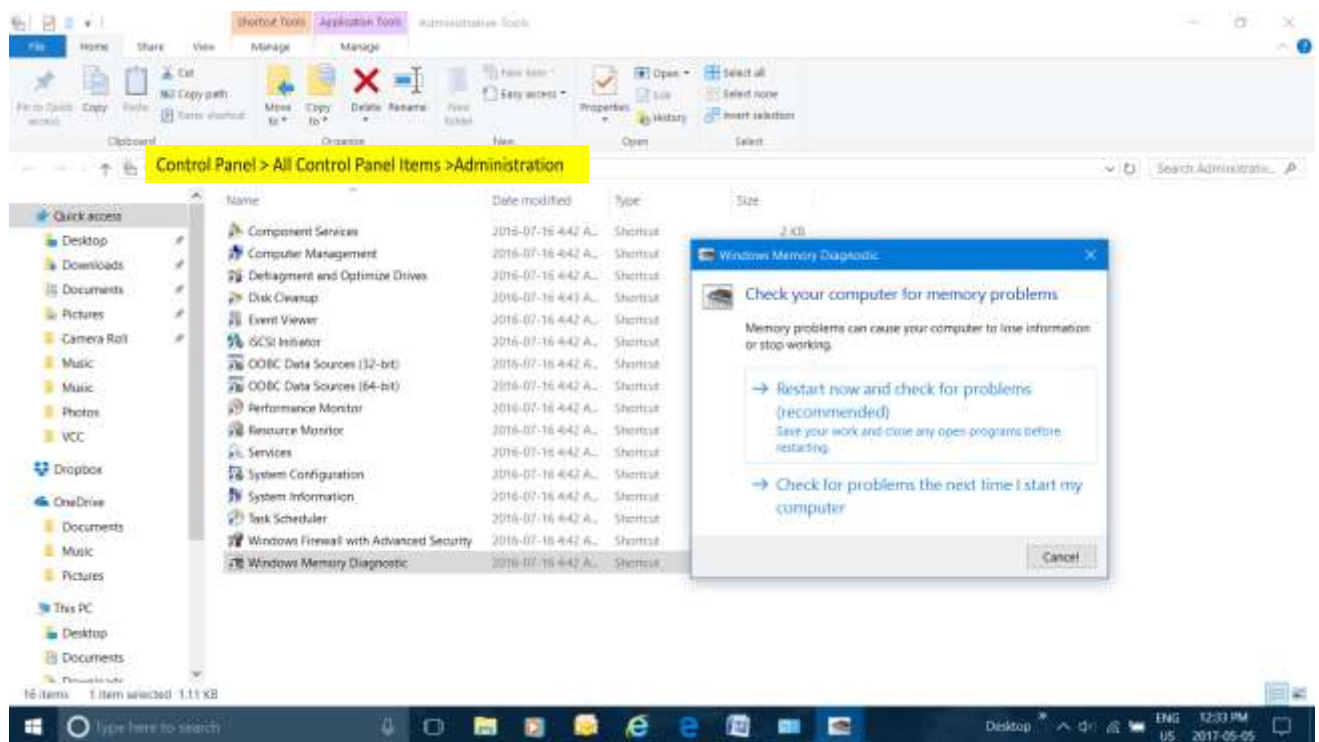

✓ B. Defrag, Optimize & Cleanup your hard drive:
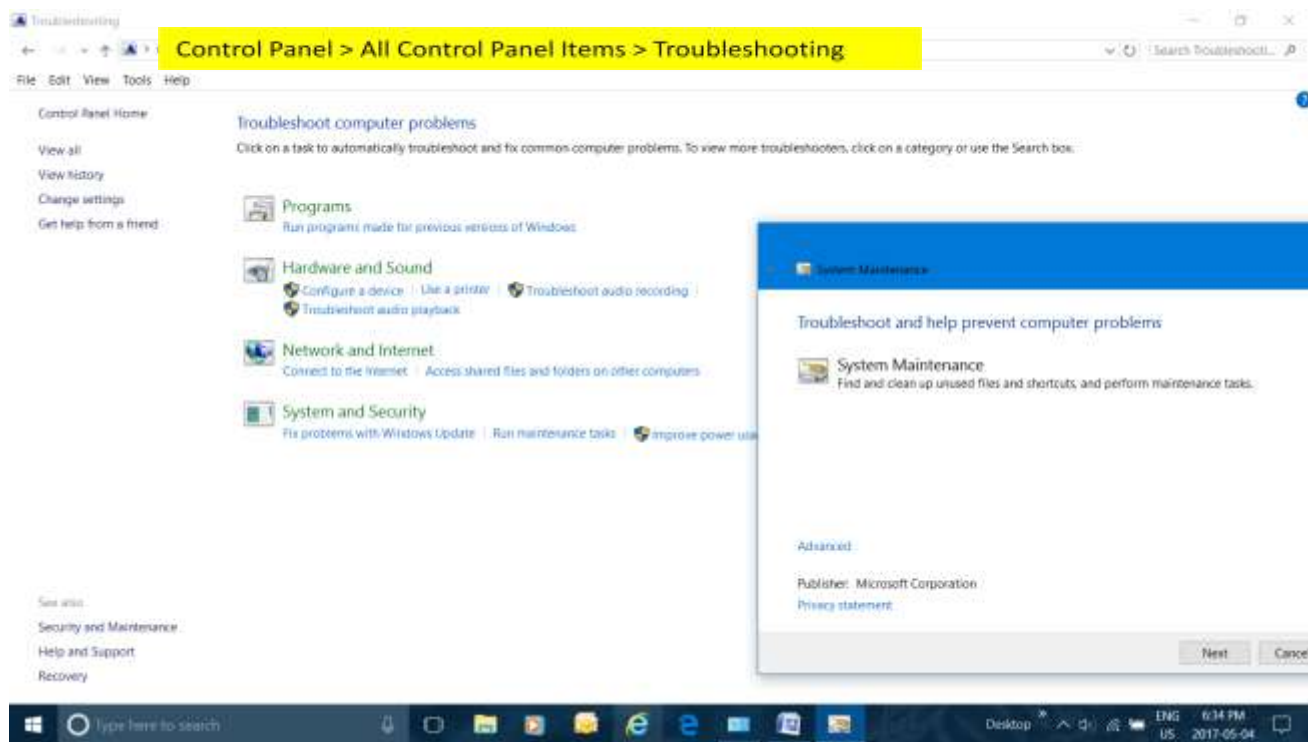
✓ C. Disk Cleanup:

✓ D. Frequently remove temporary files in your browser *(in Disk Cleanup window)*

✓ Look at your computer memory:

Bad or insufficient memory can cause slowness and other performance issues >>>

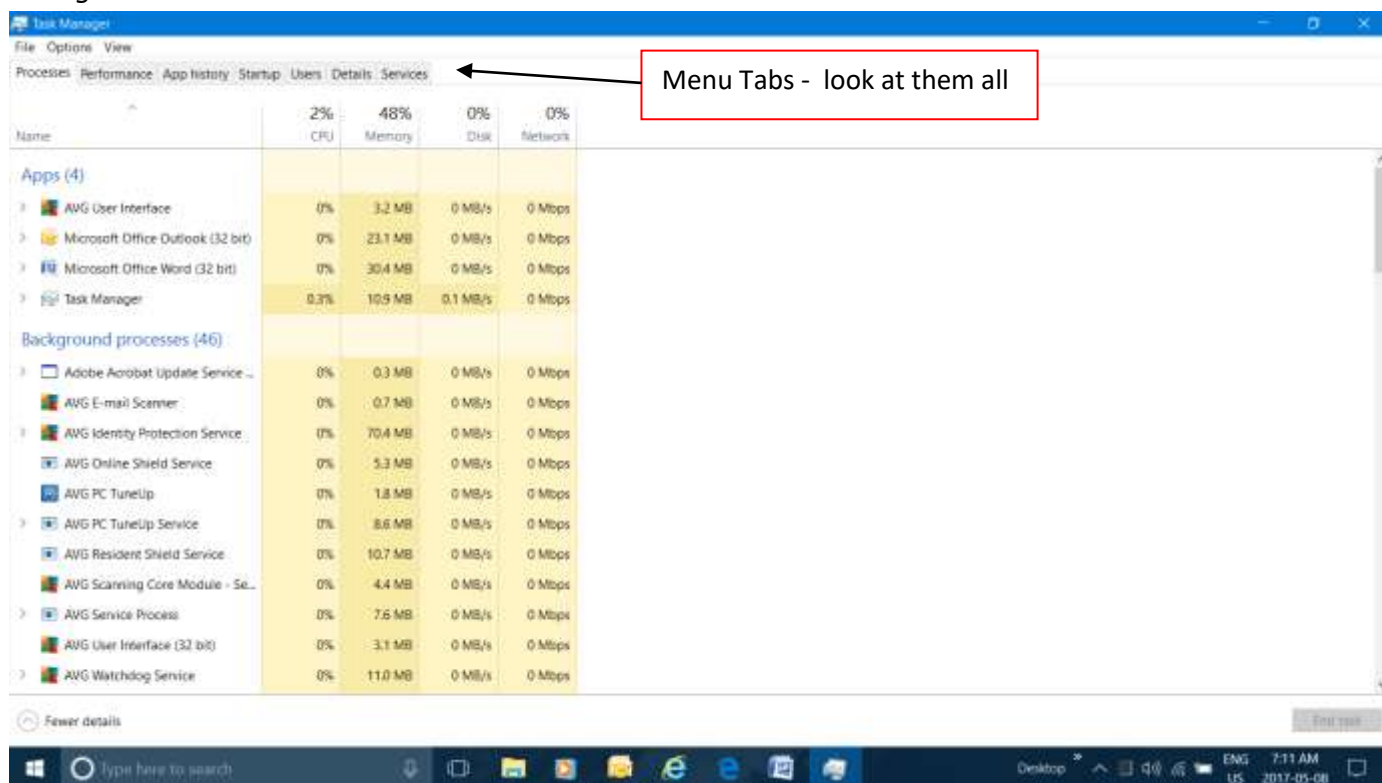✓ E.   Run Windows Diagnostic programs >>>

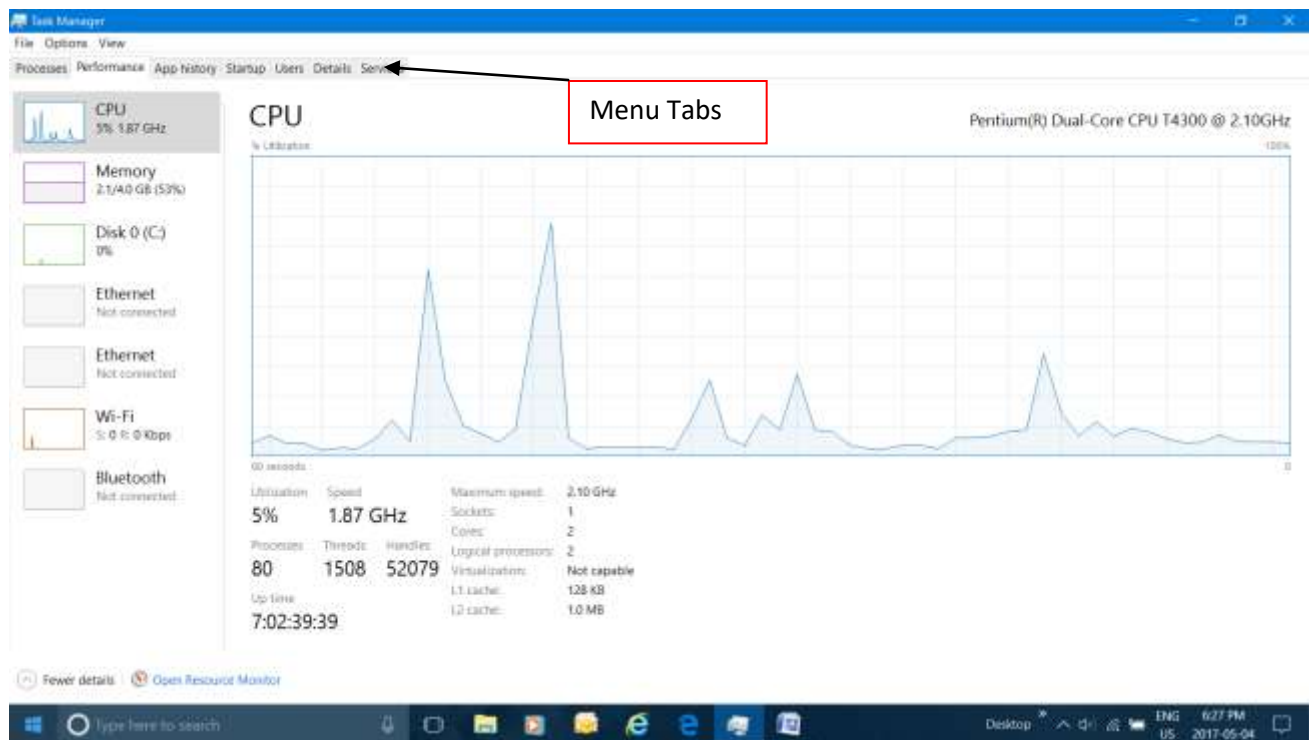# Lets Switch to the Task Manager Functions >>>

✓ F.   Look at your actual performance:

*Right click the **Task Manager** Icon and then select **Task Manager** again from the menu, then click through the menu tabs >>>*

Another performance view from the Performance Tab >>>

✓ **G. Reduce your start-up programs:** (for faster starts)

   Taken from the Task Manager Startup tab

   (a good tune-up program will do this for you - see next screen shot)

And finally >>>

✓ **H. Buy and use a third party performance software package to:**

Clean & Repair the Registry
Fix Broken Shortcuts
Clear System Cache & Logs
& Much more: Eg:

A few words of wisdom from 30 years of computing experience:

- Don't let your client email (webmail too) program get clogged with hundreds of emails in your inbox. Put emails in specifically created folders and keep your inbox cleaned frequently or archived to prevent corruption and other behavioural issues. While you in a cleaning mood uninstall programs you don't use and be very careful what you install. *(what you want often comes with programs you don't want)*

- Set aside a comfortable time in your life such as every two weeks or once a month to perform the necessary tasks and checks such as running virus and malware programs. Automate and schedule them if you want.

- Buy, or use for free, a good PC Tune-up program to make your life much less technically challenging.

- **Never, never, turn your computer off with the power switch until Windows has shut down**. The one exception to this rule is when your computer locks up and your hard drive is not running (hard drive light is not blinking). In this situation, you can turn the power off without harmful effects to the hard drive. As cutting the power can also result in lost data or Windows files, you should only do this when you have to.

- Never unplug peripherals from the computer when it is powered up. That includes USB flash drives and external hard drives. Its a sure-fire way to cause hardware failures and software corruption.

- Always power down your laptop at night and when moving it around. This prevents hardware damage, minimizes time for hackers to invade and resets software for updates.

- If you find this checklist beyond your full understanding, take a course on the subjects discussed and learn the use of the File (Task) Manager and some of the functions of the Control Panel.

  Finally, always stay alert. Don't click on links that you don't recognize, or download files from people you don't know personally.

- <mark>PS   See the Addendum for some bonus Third Party Quick fixes for Windows errors.</mark>

 Rick Weatherhead, Victoria, BC, rick@islandnet.com

Addendum

How to Fix Windows Error Messages >>>

"This is a very common question believe it or not!"
PC Maintenance Problems are usually caused by a corrupt registry entry. The best thing you can do, to prevent your PC from getting more error messages or further registry corruption, is to fix this problem immediately by following the easy instructions below.

Most errors are caused by poor maintenance of your computer. But no fear, repairing and getting rid of Pc Maintenance Problems can be **just as simple as following these 4 steps below or trying the 16 steps yourself.**

Try a Third Party Quick Fix – Here's the easy way >>>

1. **Download Error Repair Tool** for free
   *"You'll see a new window pop-up for confirmation. If the link not work,try this **Mirror**"*
   how long will it takes to download(total size:4.5MB):1MB ADSL:10s; 64K modem:15 mintues
2. Click "Save File" and follow the simple installation instructions.
3. Click "Quick Scan" to Scan your computer with the SmartPCFixer.
4. Click the **"Fix All"** button to repair Pc Maintenance Problems.

Use this if the Download button doesn't work:

http://www.smartpcfixer.com/support/45/pc-maintenance

Why Do Errors Happen?

There's actually a number of reasons why PC Maintenance Problems might of happened, but of course the most common reason is caused when new programs are installed over all old ones that are not completely uninstalled 100%, causing registry pile ups and of course, getting error messages. Another reason, is damage that's been done by malware programs, attaching themselves to your PC and wrecking havoc, deleting crucial files from your PC.

Why you should try a Third Party Quick Fix? >>>
99% of the time, a program called **SmartPCFixer**, designed just for this specific reason, so you don't have to pay some technician $80hr plus to fix your PC, can be used to repair all of your computer's error messages, missing or broken files. **SmartPCFixer** will scan over your Windows's registry and repair the following: Internet Explorer errors, Outlook Express errors, Blue screen of death, sound problems, driver errors, virtual memory errors, ActiveX errors, Javascript errors, VB errors, EXE/ DLL/ OCX/ INF/ VXD errors and more. It will also tune your computer for **maximum performance.**

Fix Windows Error Messages Yourself >>>

In most cases, windows error such as 0X8xxxxxxx series or some common error code are caused by a computer virus that has turned off Windows Update, or another service on your computer that is needed by Windows Update. If your computer is infected with a virus, you will need to scan and clean it first, and then restart these services. While your computer might not be infected with a virus, it is recommended that you follow steps to scan for viruses, and then turn the services on.

You must be logged on as an administrator to perform these steps.
1.Open Administrative Tools by clicking the Start button , clicking Control Panel, clicking System and Maintenance, and then clicking Administrative Tools.

2.Double-click Services. If you are prompted for an administrator password or confirmation, type the password or provide confirmation.

3.In the Services window, double-click Background Intelligent Transfer Service.

4.On the General tab, under Startup type, click Manual, and then click Apply.

5.Click the Log On tab, and make sure the service is enabled in every hardware profile listed.

6.Click the General tab, click Start, and then click OK. If you are prompted for an administrator password or confirmation, type the password or provide confirmation.

7.In the Services window, double-click Windows Event Log.

8.On the General tab, next to Startup type, make sure that Automatic is selected.

9.Next to Service status, check to see if the service is started. If it is not, click Start, and then click OK. If you are prompted for an administrator password or confirmation, type the password or provide confirmation.

10.In the Services window, double-click the Windows Update service.

11.On the General tab, next to Startup type, make sure that Automatic is selected.

12.Next to Service status, check to see if Started is listed. If it is not, click Start, and then click OK. If you are prompted for an administrator password or confirmation, type the password or provide confirmation.

13.In the Services window, double-click Software Licensing.

14.On the General tab, next to Startup type, make sure that Automatic is selected.

15.Next to Service status, check to see if Started is listed. If it is not, click Start, and then click OK. If you are prompted for an administrator password or confirmation, type the password or provide confirmation.

16.Close the Services window, and try to install Windows updates again.

Here's some monthly PC maintenance checks used by professionals that you can use as additional tasks to the above ☑Checklist to maintain your computer both inside and out:

1. **Update Installed Software** – In addition to updating Windows, you will also want to make sure that the third-party software installed on your PC is also current. This especially rings true for Adobe Reader, Flash and Java since they are often exploited in cyber-attacks. So make sure they are all up-to-date with the latest security fixes.

2. **Do a Full-System Antivirus Scan** – Double-check that your antivirus program is up-to-date with the latest virus definitions and perform a full-system scan to verify that your system is still clear of any Trojans, viruses, or other malware.

3. **Delete & Organize Files** – Chances are you've created or added plenty of files throughout the month, so it wouldn't hurt to go through your files and clean them up a bit. Remove any files you don't need and organize the ones you do so they are easily accessible for later use.

4. **Uninstall Unused Programs** – If you have the tendency to install a lot of programs then review the list of the ones that you currently installed & remove any that you don't need.

5. **Take a quick glance at your system tray area** *(that's the one on the right hand side of the* Task Bar) for what is running in memory. The up arrow $\wedge$ on the system tray is part of what's in memory too. If you have many tasks running its time to check your memory function and startup area mentioned in the ------☑Checklist

6. **Clear Out the Dust Bunnies** – Dust can clog your system fans, lead to overheating issues and even cause hardware failure if it's allowed to get too out of hand. If you have the technical know-how, carefully open up your computer and use a can of compressed air to remove any dust bunnies that have collected. *Of course this is more for PC's and not laptops.*