

- **AntiVirus vs Internet Security**

Ok, so this is the main one you MUST have. Internet Security versions of AV software include a firewall and other security protections. Some even include cleaners and privacy protection options. If you can't afford the "paid" versions there are free versions of Avast and AVG but as the free versions only provide basic Anti Virus protection they will need to be paired up with a free firewall product and free cleaner (see below). **Paid products to try include Norton, Kaspersky and MacAfee.**

- **Housekeeping Software:** This software will periodically remove temporary internet files and check your registry is kept clean. Also, which improves start up performance, it has a nice "start up" menu that controls what programs start up when you boot up your PC. Over time browsing and installing and using software creates many small temporary files that are never deleted due to the way browsers and apps work when they are shutdown. By far the best and well known of these housekeeping packages is the free ccleaner software by Piriform www.ccleaner.com however it's not free for business users so the free alternative for business use is BleachBit www.bleachbit.org . Ccleaner is easier to use and for a small fee the Pro may be your best option as a business.

- **Backups**

Keep your personal files in separate areas from application or system files. E.g. Documents, Video, Music, folders etc. as this will make it easier to keep automated backups straightforward. Backup these folders on a regular basis (automated if possible) to USB/flash/DVD/external/Network/Cloud drive and use encryption whenever possible. Windows has a default backup utility

<https://www.windowscentral.com/how-backup-windows-10-automatically>

Acronis Trueimage - (Free version available) - EaseUS Todo Backup – (Free version available)

ShadowProtect 5 - Not free but easiest to use - All have bootable startup DVD/flash drive creation

All encrypt your backups which is important!

- **Encryption**

If you have an Enterprise or Pro or Education edition of windows 10 there is a "free" option to encrypt your whole disk (recommended) or certain folders or drives. For usage please see

<https://www.windowscentral.com/how-use-bitlocker-encryption-windows-10>

If you don't then there is Hasleo BitLocker Anywhere www.easyuefi.com or VeraCrypt.

- **Firewall**

This should come bundled with your Internet Security software but if it doesn't or you only buy AntiVirus software or use free Avast, AVG etc then you can also download and use **ZoneAlarm, PrivateFirewall or Peerblock.**

What you need to achieve is a Firewall that blocks most incoming connections (not viable if you are a gamer that plays with others on the internet). In addition, most can block connections to known suspicious sites via a tick in a box. Use the wizard or for more savvy users there are fine controls.

- **WiFi** – When using wireless internet at home use a strong passphrase (at least 20 characters or more using symbols and upper lower case mix and numbers). Remember that although it's a pain to remember, once your devices are connected that's it you don't have to remember it again. It's also why most ISP hubs are supplied with a default WiFi password that looks like gobbledygook. You can use their supplied one to begin with* and in fact, most people don't know how to change it anyway. Also, It's most important that you also turn off WPS if its available as this is a weak way in for drive by hackers. * If you have had your hub for some time, remember it's always best to change the password from time to time. At least every 6 months
- **Performance monitor** – This is for advanced users and is based on using Task manager (right click bottom bar of your Windows PC). Task manager will allow you to see whats hogging the system resources and can often identify why your PC is running slow.
- **Adware** - blocking advertising traffic and tracking cookies (spyware) will help your PC's stretched resources go further. These “drainers” often come with official software and by browsing legitimate sites by default so you need an application like **Adaware** to help detect and remove them. www.adaware.com
- **Restoring or Recovering your PC from disaster.**

This is going beyond housekeeping and maintenance but its mentioned here because if you don't perform the following procedures you will not have many options available to you or your PC doctor in the event your PC becomes unbootable through hardware or software corruption.

Make a bootable CD/DVD/USB drive using your backup software (see overleaf).

Ensure you take backups of important docs/pics/music/videos/etc on separate media - encrypted

Regularly make windows take system “restore points” –

<https://www.tenforums.com/tutorials/4588-system-restore-windows-10-a.html> (use option 2)
- **How to find a registered PC doctor.**

BCS – The British Computer Society has a royal charter and is in the category of a charity. They have a registration process for IT technicians to apply for called RITTech which recognises the talents of the IT professionals who design, build and maintain our digital world.

For more information visit the British Computer Society – www.bcs.org

In addition remember that a personal recommendation from someone you trust is hard to beat. You may find local support by searching for PC doctor in yell.com (the online yellow pages).

Remember that a small investment of time and money with the help of a PC professional to go through these things, if you are not comfortable with IT, will be far cheaper than getting someone “in” to help in an emergency situation and in fact in some cases your data will not be recoverable.