

Disk Defragmentation

Each time you turn on your system, open an application, or create a document, you can hear the disk churn or watch the access light blink. Whether you use the FAT file system for compatibility or NTFS for security, you're not immune to the productivity-sapping effects of file fragmentation.

Very little disk activity is required to chop your files into pieces and scatter them across your disk. Installing and upgrading applications creates temporary files that get copied, unpacked, and deleted and this creates fragmentation. Running services on your system that feature automatic logging, such as tracking security and network events, means those files are constantly growing; and they fragment a bit at a time.

As your files get spread out and separated from their directory entries, the drives waste time going back and forth from the directory to a chain of file fragments each time they access files. A large disk cache can help hide the problem, but the more you work, the worse performance gets.

Reversing the effects of disk fragmentation is easy to do with a disk de-fragmentation utility. Defragmentation reorganises your files and directories to restore the disk performance you had when your system was new. It collects pieces of fragmented files into single contiguous files for faster access. Some studies have shown file access times dropping by an average of more than 60-percent after defragmenting.

To defragment Windows 200x/XP operating systems:

1. Right-click on the Start button and choose the Explore option
2. Right-click on the C: drive and choose Properties
3. From the Tools tab, click Defragment Now
4. Click defragment

