

Fix It!

On the rare occasion that you might experience problems with your Mac, this document will endeavour to help you to get it running smoothly again. For a good book on the Mac and all its quirks, try Macworld's "Macintosh Secrets". It's jammed full with tips and facts that every Mac user should be aware of. This book is un-rateable because it is essential. It costs around £40 though, so start saving!

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Section 1

What your Mac can do to help

Yes, it's true, your Mac can perform some basic maintenance ON ITSELF! If you commit to memory just a couple of simple keyboard procedures, you'll find simple problems can be avoided.

- **Rebuild the Desktop** You'll need a chisel & mallet for this. No, just kidding!

The "Desktop" isn't just what your Mac sits on, no it's also the word Apple chose to call the virtual desktop or 'Finder' where the Mac runs all its programs from. It's basically a system file (invisible to the user) where the MacOS writes all the names of folders and programs and files you use & create, ever. If your Desktop File becomes corrupted or just disorganised this will seriously affect the performance of your Mac. However, the Mac has a built in software routine to entirely "rebuild" the Desktop which you can invoke with a couple of keystrokes.

To perform this miracle, the Finder needs to be restarted, i.e. restart your Mac from the **Special** menu. Then immediately press both the '*option*' & ⌘ keys (bottom left of your keyboard) and hold them down throughout the start-up until you see the dialog box :



Select OK and the rebuild process begins, which can take up to 5 minutes.

- **Start your Mac with System Extensions turned off.**

You may have found that your Mac started quitting applications after installation of new software. This is a sign that you have an *Extension* conflict.

If your Mac won't operate properly, restart it and hold down just the '*shift*' key. This stops the system extensions from loading and you can get rid of the suspicious ones. If this solves the problem, restart your Mac again, but this time hold down the space bar. This brings up the extensions manager and you can now choose which extensions will be loaded. It's a bit tricky to work out which ones to choose, so a process of elimination is the way to go. Start by disabling recently installed extensions and work from there. You'll have to restart your Mac a few times so it could be a lengthy process! A commercial program is available called "Conflict Catcher" and this does the donkey work for you by restarting the computer automatically. It's possible that one of your programs won't work with the others, in this case you can use the 'Extensions Manager' control panel to set up custom configurations for different applications using your Mac, selecting the extensions only required for that particular application.

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Section 2

Further Self Help

There are some other causes for Mac malfunction and some can be cured by you! Errors can creep into the file structure on the hard disk. These errors are not affected by a rebuild of the Desktop. So what do you do?

- **Error Correction**



On your System Install disks you will find a piece of software called "Disk First Aid". You can use this to verify the hard drive and correct some errors.

- **Corrupted Preference Files**



Occasionally preference files can become corrupted, causing program instability and crashes. Most preference files can be found in the Preferences Folder, located within the System Folder and most can be safely deleted as a fresh file will be created the next time the program is run. It's a good idea to clean through the Preferences folder

monthly and delete any files that have been left behind by a Demo application. This is especially important if you try out a program demo and then decide to buy the full version as the demo preference file could cause a conflict with the full version.

- **Virus Protection**



A good, free program for the eradication of pesky viruses is "Disinfectant". It can be found amongst the resources of cover CD's on popular Mac magazines.

NOTE: Sadly, Disinfectant is no longer supported by the programmers, so no more updates are available after release 3.7.1. - It is charitable institutions like Disinfectant which helped the Mac get a name as a friendly operating system. There are still some free-ware anti-virus programs on cover CDs but for ultimate protection you need to purchase a commercial program such as Norton Anti-Virus

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Section 3

It's no good, it just doesn't work

So your Mac is still malfunctioning. In this case try these:

- **Reinstall the System**



If your Mac gets so confused that rebuilding the Desktop and shuffling the Extensions fails to remedy it's problems, then you can reinstall the System software. This isn't as drastic as it sounds. It can be effectively achieved "on the fly" or "warm"; i.e. you just insert your System software disk into the Mac and run the install program. This doesn't affect any of the work on your hard disk or need to have the disk formatted! Long live the Mac.

If your Mac isn't listening, then place the System Software CD in the CD drive and restart the Mac from that CD (hold down the C key whilst booting) or, pre-System 8, use the 'Disk Tools' floppy which came with your CD (or the 'Install Disk' that came with your floppies) to get its attention by :

1. Turning the Mac off as nicely as possible
2. Inserting the Disk Tools floppy in your Mac's drive
3. Switch on the Mac again
4. Let it boot up. . .
5. Locate & double click the Install icon if you want to reinstall the system

Note : If you want to format your hard disk, it's a good idea to **save** data and work at this stage, as formatting will **erase** your hard drive.

Were not going into how to do that here as the method depends largely on your own hardware set-up. (Just make sure you have *lots* of formatted floppy disks standing by!)

Remember, serious problems are made from lots of little ones. So rebuild your Desktop at least once a month, clean out old preference files regularly and reinstall the System at least once a year.