

Three ways to free up hard drive space.

You may want to do these functions in addition to the info that we have provided previously on increasing your memory - hands on demo with Forrest Meiere.

No matter how big your hard drive is, your operating system will take up a big chunk of it. Things are even more cramped when you throw in system files, your favorite programs and your music library.

Though you'll never have all of the advertised space at your disposal, you can get back most of it. You'll have room for the all the things you want and then some!

Start by finding Disk Cleanup, which is built into Windows computers. To find it in Windows 8, click or tap Search and then type in Disk Cleanup. Tap or click "Settings" and then "Free up disk space by deleting unnecessary files."

In older versions of Windows, Go to Start>>Computer, right-click "Local Disk (C:)" and choose properties. The Disk Cleanup button is to the right of the pie chart.

When you run Disk Cleanup, you'll see a list of things you can remove just from Windows itself. Since Windows needs some of these files, they're not all safe to remove.

Windows selects a few things that are relatively safe to delete. You can also include "Recycle Bin," "Debug Dump Files" and "System error memory dump files" without causing any problems. Previous versions of Windows are fine to delete if they pop up, too.

One big way to save space is to delete "Temporary files." However, this might make websites behave a little weirdly at first. The same is true of "Hibernation File Cleaner." That makes your computer's [power-saving hibernation feature](#) unusable.

That can give you much more room. If you want to clean up even more space on your hard drive, you're going to have to dip into your personal files, though.

For a more detailed view of those, use [TreeSize](#) or [WizTree](#). These list all your files in descending order so that the biggest space eaters appear first.

These will probably be programs you don't use any more. You can delete them manually. In Windows 8, tap or click Search and type in Control Panel and then select Uninstall a program. In older version of Windows, go to Start>>Control Panel>>Programs (Add or Remove Programs in XP.) Once your unwanted programs are gone, run [CCleaner](#) to eliminate any leftovers.

Next, identify any big groups of files, like your music, photos or videos. While you probably don't want to delete these, you can move them to [long-term storage](#) to clean up your drive. [Free cloud storage](#) can help reduce the load, too.

While that's fine for storage, don't mistake it for backup. The best way to get free, unlimited backup is through my sponsor, [Carbonite](#). [Sign up today and you can get two extra months free when you decide to buy.](#)

Freeing up space on your hard drive can improve performance.

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