

How do I ensure my computer is good for online learning?

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To put it simply, the newer and the more regularly updated **and** restarted, the better!

Hardware

It's not so much age, as what's under the bonnet that's important. Some 5-year old computers can be better than 2-year old ones, but memory is key – have as much RAM as you can, 4GB or more recommended. Despite this, most online learning is web browser based, so even some older low spec computers can be ok to use, with a bit of patience.

Software

The newer the better, as some versions shouldn't be connecting to the internet at all.

1. **What operating system are you running?**
2. **Don't use Windows 7, Vista or XP** – Microsoft no longer supports these and they are a huge security risk.
3. Don't use **these versions of Windows 10** for the same reason: **1511 / 1607 / 1703 / 1709 / 1803**.
4. **Windows 8.1 and later versions of Windows 10 are ok** to use.
5. Go to Windows > Settings > System>About to find out what version you're running.
6. MacOS and iPad iOS versions aren't supported in the same way as Windows, but the newer the better.
7. **Are you applying updates regularly?**

Installing monthly security patches/updates and anti-virus updates as soon as they are available is essential to keep both Windows and Apple computers running reliably.

End-Userware

Meaning that what you do as the end user makes a big difference too.

Are you shutting your computer down regularly?

Switching it off and on again, i.e. restarting regularly, is the best thing you can do as it:

- Ensures security updates get properly installed
- Clears out the memory, resolving lots of performance / weird behaviour problems, especially if you're the sort of person who tends to have hundreds of web browser tabs open for days on end!
- **Think before you click!**

Scammers are constantly trying to install malware and get your personal data. Know how to spot suspicious emails, attachments or links to dodgy websites. If in doubt, don't click and then verify the email content via a different route e.g. call the sender or go to the website directly via Google, not the link. Find out more in our [Stay Safe Online FAQs](#)

De-clutter

All those trial versions and useful software you installed that you were going to use – do you know what they're doing to your computer? Are they a gateway for dodgy stuff? Did you know multiple versions of the same software e.g. Microsoft Office, can argue with one another? Un-install software you don't need.

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