Recommended PC Maintenance

A very helpful article on "Tech maintenance tasks everyone forgets about, but really shouldn't" (http://newatlas.com/tech-maintenance-tasks/33176/) gives information, illustrations and recommendations on such topics as (a) Update your Wi-Fi router, (b) Keep your operating system and other software updated, (c) Clean up disk space, (d) Backup data regularly, (e) Uninstall old unused programs, (f) Keep your drive and Windows file system healthy, (g) Clean up your equipment, and (h) Other simple tech tasks to keep in mind. A synopsis of these and other recommendations is included below.

Task	Frequency	Tools/Software	Notes
System			
Empty Recycle Bin	Weekly		Right click on Recycle Bin desktop Icon; from drop down menu click on Empty Recycle Bin.
Delete Mail Trash	Weekly/Monthly		In mail program right click on Trash or Deleted Folder and click on delete. Many mail programs have the option to automatically delete trash on exit. Look under account settings/server menu.
Clean Disk	Weekly/Monthly	MS Disk Cleanup	Under Menu (Windows Icon, lower left corner of screen), All apps, go to Windows Administrative Tools and choose Disk Cleanup. Or right click on desired drive in File Explorer, click on Properties, and select Disk Cleanup.
Check Disk (aka ChkDsk)	Monthly		In File Explorer, right click on desired drive, click on Properties, then click on Tools Tab and select Check. Note on Check Disk - you probably want to do a backup before doing a scandisk/chkdsk. Chkdsk can destroy your disk under bad cases. It's a precautionary thing in case chkdsk goes haywire.
Compact (Mail) Folder(s)	Monthly		In the mail program (for Thunderbird right click on folder and select Compact – other mail programs are similar).
Clean/Delete Browser History	Quarterly	MS Edge/ Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, or Google Chrome	Access varies depending on browser; check menu preferences, settings, options, etc.
Defrag Disk	Quarterly	MS Optimize	Under Menu, All apps, go to Windows Administrative Tools, Defragment and Optimize Drives and select Disk to be optimized (defragmented). Or right click on desired drive in File Explorer, click on Properties, and click on Optimize. (For SSDs see http://www.pcworld.com/article/2047513/fragging-wonderful-the-truth-about-defragging-your-ssd.html)

Uninstall Unused Programs	Quarterly	MS Uninstall or Revo (freeware)	Right click on Windows Icon (lower right of task bar), right click on Programs and Features
Backup Disk(s)	(D/W/M partial - depend on volume) Quarterly (full)	External Hard Drive DVD or Cloud - Use MS Backup, Drive Image, or ToDo, etc.	MS File History for System Image
Clean Registry	Quarterly	Piniform's CCleaner (free version)	Make sure you back up the registry before you clean it (CCleaner allows that)
Check Start-up Programs/Apps	Semi-annually	MS Task Manager or Mike Lin Startup CPL	Right click on Task Bar (bottom of screen), click on Task Manager, then click on Startup tab. (Only works in W10. Use MSConfig in Win7.)
Change Password(s)	Semi-annually		

BACKUP: An external hard drive is recommended at a minimum, and also recommend only using software that supports native file format—so you can read the contents of the backup with Windows/File Explorer. Highly recommended is SyncBackSE by 2Brightsparks.com. They make a free version too, but there's no tech support. The problem w/ backing up to the cloud is who's going to have access to your data? Is it encrypted—if it contains any private or other personally identifiable info—then it needs to be.

Piniform's **CCleaner** (http://www.piriform.com/ccleaner) will perform some of these tasks for you. It will clean/delete temporary internet files, browser history, empty the Recycle Bin, and purge unnecessary system files (chkdsk, clipboard, memory dumps, etc.) as well as cleanup Windows Registry problems.

Also, in later versions of Windows it is possible to automate many of these functions (https://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/windows/desktop/hh848037(v=vs.85).aspx). To fully take advantage of this feature you may need to leave your computer on most of the time. (http://www.technorms.com/46366/using-automatic-maintenance-in-windows-10) contains further discussion on how to enable/disable these features.

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Hardware			See PCWorld's Hardware Tips: Complete PC Preventive Maintenance Guide (http://www.pcworld.com/article/116583/article.html)
Clean Keyboard	Weekly	Compressed Air – wipe keytops with damp cloth	
Clean Screen	Weekly	Damp Cloth & Distilled Water	
Clean Printer	Monthly	Compressed Air Damp Cloth (Ext)	
Clean Case/Laptop	Quarterly	Vents with Compressed Air; Exterior with Damp Cloth	Ensure charger/power is disconnected before cleaning.
Clean Case/Desktop	Quarterly	Interior with Compressed Air; Exterior with Damp Cloth	Unplug power before opening/cleaning. Hold cooler fan blades so they don't turn before blowing on them with compressed air. Vacuum or blow dust from interior.