

# Cheap and Free Tools to Put Zip Back in Your PC

You can have a zippier, more responsive PC--you really can. You just need the right tools. We've collected 15 great downloads that will do the trick.

**Preston Gralla, PC World**

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Want to speed up your PC? Who doesn't? Your PC begins to slow down 10 minutes after you pull it out of the box and start using it. A clogged Registry, a full hard disk, unnecessary programs that load on startup, and an inefficiently configured broadband Internet connection are just some of the many things that can bog down your system.

Help has arrived: We've found 15 downloads that can improve PC speed. Check out all of these cheap and free tools, and download your way to a zippier computer.

## Speed Freaks

Why is your computer sluggish? The reasons are countless. You may have a clogged Registry, too many programs running in the background, or a full hard drive, for example. The following downloads can boost your PC speed by fixing these problems and more.

## DTweak



If you use Windows Vista and you're looking for an all-in-one utility to improve system performance, this program is worth a try. It has just about every speedup tool you need, offering a Registry cleaner, a disk cleaner, a disk defragmenter, and a Registry defragmenter. And those are just what the program calls Daily Tools. It has many other helpful modules as well, including optimizations for your RAM and system cache, startup and shutdown, and several dozen other functions.

The program even includes a monitor that checks on the health of your hard drive. If it detects that the drive is too warm, it recommends that you do a backup.

Download [DTweak](#) | Price: \$30

## AusLogics BoostSpeed

Here's an all-in-one utility that takes an everything-plus-the-kitchen-sink approach to enhancing PC speed. You'll find modules for just about any kind of performance boost you can name. The Boost Internet section, for example, will optimize Maximum Transmission Units to help raise your connection speed, and it will also tweak a variety of other settings, such as your DNS cache.



The Boost Windows section promises to do everything from speeding up shutdown and startup system settings. Similarly, the program has sections for boosting the speed of Microsoft Office, network.

optimizer, you'll need to check carefully to be sure the program actually boosts your machine's speed. Nevertheless, you'll find this a very good tool for overall system speedup.

Download [AusLogics BoostSpeed](#) | Price: \$25 (free trial for 15 days)

## Cleanup Assistant

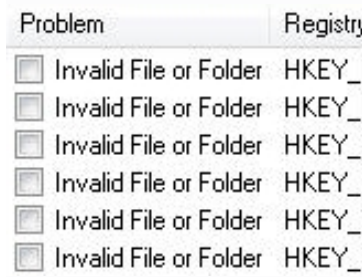


This simple freebie helps speed up your system by unclogging your hard disk. It finds duplicate files, cached files, and other excess items, and then deletes them for you. If you have personal files you no longer need and you don't want anyone else to see them, it will even shred those files so that they can't be restored. Cleanup Assistant is free and easy to use, so even though it may not be the most sophisticated of programs, it's worth a shot.

Download [Cleanup Assistant](#) | Price: Free

## Optimize for Speed

### Eusing Free Registry Cleaner



One major cause of system slowdowns is a bloated Registry filled with out-of-date or bad entries. Your Registry gets junked up in many ways, notably when you uninstall a program that is ill-behaved and leaves traces of itself behind. As a result, one of the best ways to improve PC speed is to use a Registry cleaner or fixer. Plenty of for-pay fixers exist, but if you want just the basics, Eusing Free Registry Cleaner is a good bet. It scans your Registry for problems, reports on what it finds, and then fixes the problems you tell it to address. You can also restore your original Registry settings if the new ones cause problems themselves.

Download [Eusing Free Registry Cleaner](#) | Price: Free

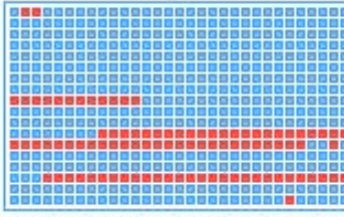
## CCleaner

If you're looking for the ultimate free PC cleanup tool to help boost system performance, look no further: You've found it in CCleaner. For a start, it cleans out junk and unnecessary files in Internet Explorer, Windows Explorer, your overall Windows system, and many applications. It also includes a Registry scanner that hunts down and fixes problems, and it offers an uninstaller for removing unwanted programs. In addition, it deletes traces of your Internet activity to protect your privacy.

Download [CCleaner](#) | Price: Free

## Auslogics Registry Defrag

### before defragmentation



Cleaning your Registry with a tool such as Eusing Free Registry Cleaner (see above) will go a long way toward improving PC speed—but it won't go all the way. Even after you scrub the Registry, it may still suffer from bloat, because over time the Registry becomes defragmented, particularly when you add and remove entries. The free, simple Auslogics Registry Defrag utility defragments the Registry and gains you a bit of hard-disk space. More important, though, is that it speeds up your computer's access to the Registry by compacting it—and that means a faster PC. The program is free, it's simple to use, and it revs up your PC...what else could you

ask for?

**Download [Auslogics Registry Defrag](#) | Price: Free**

## Advanced Windows Optimizer



The all-in-one Advanced Windows Optimizer offers numerous modules for optimizing, speeding up, and cleaning your PC. Its Registry Cleaner will kill invalid Registry entries that may slow down your system, and its Startup Cleaner will help you eliminate unneeded programs that launch on startup. It also has assorted cleaners for wiping out junk files and other excess material, plus system optimizers for deleting invalid shortcuts, optimizing Windows' use of RAM, and related tasks.

Note that the trial version has some limitations compared with the full version. For example, it will correct only up to 20 Registry flaws.

**Download [Advanced Windows Optimizer](#) | Price: \$40 (free trial for 15 days)**

## Advanced Windows Care 2 Personal

Here's a quick, easy, and free way to juice up system performance. It has all the basic tools you'll need for raising PC speed, and it is exceedingly simple to work with. It even has a one-click fix function in which it analyzes your machine and then corrects any problems it finds.

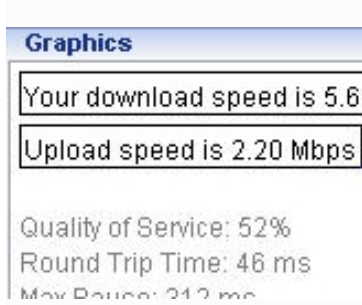
Most useful are the startup manager, which shows you all the programs that run on startup and lets you kill any that you no longer want to start; the Registry fixer, which addresses invalid or incorrect entries and values; and the system optimizer, which alters the way Windows runs in order to improve performance. The app has a slew of other tools as well, such as a spyware remover, a junk file cleaner, a privacy sweeper, and some very good tools that show details about your hardware and software configuration.

**Download [Advanced Windows Care 2 Personal](#) | Price: Free**

## Internet Boosters

These days, we practically live our lives online. If you're looking for a way to boost your Internet experience, check out these downloads.

## MySpeed PC Lite Edition



It's tough to know whether your Internet connection needs a speed boost. That's where this useful program comes in: It measures your upload and download speeds, and then shows you where your results lie on a continuum of access methods, from a slow modem to a superfast connection. It will also graph your speed over time.

Just as useful, though, is its analysis, which provides more details and helps you understand what the speed figures mean. For example, if it measures your upload speed at 5.66 megabits per second, it will say that your speed is good for service rated at 6 mbps and reasonable for service advertised as 7 mbps, but poor if you're paying for 8 mbps or above. It will also measure your quality of service, which determines whether you can sustain your maximum transfer speed.

For best results, use this application's information to determine whether you need a performance boost, run another program such as SG TCP Optimizer (see below) to enhance your speed, and then run this utility again to see whether the tweaks helped.

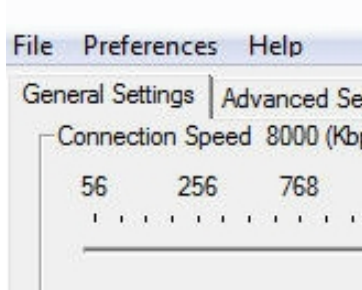
[Download MySpeed PC Lite Edition](#) | Price: Free

## Bandwidth Monitor 2

This nifty little free application won't actually boost your bandwidth speed, and it isn't as comprehensive as MySpeed PC Lite, but it will help you know whether any network-related speed tweaks you've made have helped performance. It tells you your current upload and download speeds, and provides a graph of the speeds over time. In addition, it provides a log of your activities, including the total amount of data uploaded and downloaded in a day.

[Download Bandwidth Monitor 2](#) | Price: Free

## SG TCP Optimizer



No matter how swift your broadband connection is, it's not fast enough. You can't get your ISP to juice up the bandwidth, but you can make the most out of what you have. This free program will tweak various connection settings to help you obtain a faster, smoother connection.

At first glance the program is daunting, because it seems to require you to know certain technical details, such as latency and largest MTU. Your best bet is to click the *Optimal settings* button at the bottom of the screen and then click *Apply changes*; that way, the program makes decisions on its own. Unless you're very experienced, you probably don't want to muck around with the settings yourself.

Keep in mind that the proper connection settings can vary significantly from PC to PC, so you could possibly change your settings and end up slowing your system down. Mostly, though, if you follow the app's advice you'll find yourself with a better connection.

Download [SG TCP Optimizer](#) | Price: Free


## cFosSpeed

This program promises to speed up your DSL or cable modem connection through what it calls "traffic shaping"--the prioritizing of certain data packets. You won't have to know anything about data packets or TCP/IP to use this utility, because it learns as you use the Internet, silently determining the best way to "shape" your traffic to boost performance. It then makes adjustments accordingly, and as a result you should see faster page loads and download times.

Note that the program can't improve your actual total bandwidth (that's something only your ISP can do); instead, it makes the most efficient use of your bandwidth so that you get an effective speed boost. The program also has some nice extras, such as a real-time bandwidth monitor.

Download [cFosSpeed](#) | Price: \$36 (free trial for 15 days)

## uTorrent



Dedicated fans of file and media downloads face one frustration above all: slow download speeds. Though you can't increase your total bandwidth without switching to a faster ISP, you can download files more quickly by using the BitTorrent protocol, which is far faster than traditional methods. When you use the BitTorrent protocol, you retrieve pieces of a file simultaneously from multiple locations, significantly speeding up downloads.

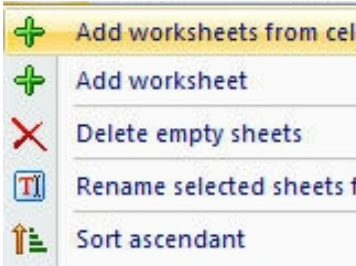
There's one problem with the BitTorrent client, though: It's not a particularly good piece of software. The solution is to use uTorrent, a superior client. You can easily search for files from directly within the program, track and manage your downloads, and create your own files to distribute via the BitTorrent protocol. Among other good features in the program are a configurable bandwidth scheduler and global and per-torrent speed limiting.

Download [uTorrent](#) | Price: Free

## Application Boosters

Sometimes only an application needs speeding up. The next two downloads will help with Microsoft Excel and with Adobe Acrobat Reader, respectively.

## Worksheet Booster



Excel jockeys know that building and using spreadsheets can be a long, tough slog at times. If you're looking to cut down on the time needed to perform repetitive (and not-so-repetitive) tasks, give Worksheet Booster a try. It provides nearly two dozen new commands that speed up various tasks, such as creating a new worksheet from existing data. Instead of taking several steps to complete an action yourself, just choose a command from Worksheet Booster's drop-down list, and it does the rest. It works with Excel 2000, Excel XP, Excel 2003, and Excel 2007.

Download [Worksheet Booster](#) | Price: \$14 (shareware)

## PDF SpeedUp

Few programs on the planet are more annoying than the Adobe Acrobat Reader. It's slow, it's buggy, and it seems to drag down entire systems whenever it's loaded. This freebie eliminates most of the program's annoyances, disabling the splash screen, killing the piped-in ads in the upper-right corner of the toolbar, turning off the invisible updates feature that sucks up RAM and system resources, and preventing plug-ins from loading, among other things.

Using the program is as simple as can be: Just click the *Optimize* button, and it does its work. To bring back your original settings, click *Restore*. You can also customize exactly which features it optimizes. The program works with versions 3 through 7 of Adobe Acrobat Reader.

Download [PDF SpeedUp](#) | Price: Free