

Windows laptops & PCs | Medium | 2 min read

Speeding up an old laptop honestly: when a tidy-up helps and when to upgrade

Nobody can make a ten-year-old laptop feel brand new, but there are cheap changes that really help, and some warning signs that it is time to move on. We would rather tell you honestly than sell you something you do not need.

Free things to try first

1. Restart regularly. A PC left on for weeks slows down.
2. Uninstall programs you do not use, in **Settings, Apps**.
3. Turn off start-up apps you do not need in **Task Manager**.
4. Make sure at least 15% of the drive is free.
5. Install Windows updates and run a scan with **Windows Security**.
6. Close browser tabs and take out extensions you do not use.

Check the two parts that matter most

Open **Task Manager** with **Ctrl + Shift + Esc**, then **Performance**.

- **Disk**: if it shows as an **HDD** (hard disk) and often sits near 100%, a solid-state drive (SSD) would transform it. This is the best upgrade for an older laptop. Newer versions show the type under the drive's name.
- **Memory**: if it is nearly full during normal use, more RAM helps. 8 GB is a sensible minimum today, and 16 GB is comfortable.

Upgrades

- Many laptops allow an SSD swap, and some allow extra RAM. On thin laptops the RAM is often soldered to the board, and cannot be changed.
- Do not open the laptop yourself unless you know how. Back up first, because swapping a drive involves copying or reinstalling Windows.
- An old battery can also be replaced on many models.

When replacing is the better choice

- The PC is not eligible for Windows 11 and you need security updates.
- The upgrade would cost nearly as much as a new machine.
- The screen, keyboard or hinges are damaged.
- The processor is very old and struggles even after a clean-up.

Do not

Do not buy "PC speed booster" software. It is rarely helpful and often unwanted.

When to get more help

Get in touch with the make, model and age of the laptop, and we will tell you plainly whether an upgrade is worth it. Back up your files first.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.