

Mac Cleanup Tips for macOS Sierra

Spring comes with its own rituals. We like to throw open the windows, beat the dust out of the rugs, and straighten up our home office desktops. Don't stop at cleaning your home this season. Clean up your Mac too!

If you're using macOS Sierra, it has a feature that will help tremendously with your Spring cleaning: **Optimize Storage**. You can use Optimize Storage to activate the 'Store in iCloud' option, remove iTunes videos you've watched (they can be re-downloaded), empty the Trash automatically, reduce clutter caused by large files and downloads, and a lot more. It is especially handy if you're using a Mac laptop with limited flash storage. You will find Optimize Storage in About This Mac under the 'black apple' image in the upper left corner of your screen. Click on Storage and then Manage to start the process. Apple has a good webpage explaining the whole process: <https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT206996>

Delete unnecessary downloads

For most people, the Downloads folder you'll find in Finder is a dumping ground where files pile up in forgotten heaps. Open Finder, look them over and start tossing them out - old photos, videos, PDFs, etc. And don't overlook those downloaded DMG files, as once opened they are no longer needed. They are just taking up space, and it's large space, usually 50 to 100MB for each of them!

Empty out space-hogging Mail Downloads

I get quite a few attachments via email—PDFs, ePub ebooks, Word documents, images, you name it. Most of the time the document saves itself to your Mail Downloads folder, hidden away in your Library file. Double-click enough files, and that folder can balloon in size. That's why I make sure to check it and empty it a couple of times per year.

The easiest way to open Spotlight, the magnifying glass in the upper right corner of your screen (or press Command-Space). A search field appears—and then type in Mail Downloads. Click on Folders and Finder will open and you should see the Mail Downloads Data folder. Once you get to the folder, you can select all files and delete, or rescue the few files you want to keep awhile in a more permanent location. (Or read more below ...)

Keep a clean cache

We've all heard "Empty your cache" as a web browser troubleshooting tip. As it turns out, a Mac stores a lot of information in files called caches, allowing quick access to that data and reducing the need to fetch it from the original source

again. However that information can sometimes become corrupted and takes up a lot of space. Unfortunately cleaning your cache and emptying Mail Downloads is somewhat technical and might be a challenge for you. So instead I recommend you download a little helper app.

CleanMyDrive2

These unneeded files are tough to find and dislodge so I recommend a free little utility program in the Apple App Store called CleanMyDrive2, from a trusted software developer called MacPaw. It will search and clean your drives - internal & external hard drives, SD cards and USB flash drives. Their goal is to up-sell you to their \$30 fully functioned utility program called CleanMyMac3 (which I use). But try this free little app first as a good demonstration of the full program.

Disinfect your grubby keyboard

My final tip is a real cleaning project. My keyboard accumulates so much dust and crumbs that occasionally I have to turn it upside down and shake it just to get the keys to work. But a thorough cleaning, even a couple of times a year, can knock away the grime and germs. Unplug your keyboard or, if it is wireless, remove its batteries. If you're cleaning a laptop, shut it down and unplug it. Blow the dust out from between the keys with a can of compressed air.

To finish the job, Apple recommends Lysol Wipes or Clorox Kitchen Disinfecting wipes by brand name. The basic idea, however, is to wipe your keys gently with something alcohol-based. (Before you use a wipe, squeeze out any excess liquid.) As tempting as it might be when you're feeling germaphobic, do not use wipes with bleach, or spray anything with Lysol; you might damage the keyboard.