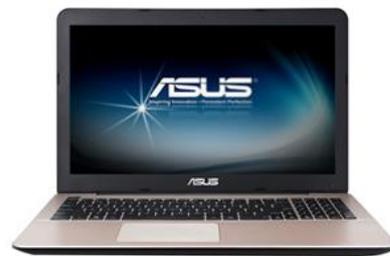


Caring for Your Laptop

Your laptop is a sophisticated device that needs to be treated with respect. Follow this advice and you should minimise your chances of expensive accidental damage.



1. No liquids near your laptop. **Ever.** This includes drinks, liquid food like sauces and soups, water and cleaning fluids. At best, you may end up with some sticky keys and needing a keyboard replacement. At worst, the liquid will seep through the keyboard and short out your motherboard, a part generally unjustifiably expensive to replace.
2. When you put it down, make sure any cooling vents are not obstructed (Figure 1). Bedspreads and soft cushions, for example, can mould around the case and block vents. These must be clear always. Failure to ensure this may result in damaging overheating.
3. Make sure you have a good backup system in place. Even brand new hard drives can fail at any time. Ask us for help to figure out which backup is best for you. Your files, particularly photos, are invaluable. Do not risk it.
4. Keep an eye on heat output. Check the vents occasionally after it has been turned on for a time. Do it as soon as you can so that you have a “reference point”. A little bit of warmth is OK. Blazing hot is most certainly not. Also listen to the fan. It may work harder at sometimes than others, but it should not sound high-pitched and struggling. If this is happening, bring it in immediately for assessment. The fan may need to be cleaned or replaced. If the laptop shuts down or restarts unexpectedly, then this is almost certainly due to overheating. Failure to act may result in terminal damage to your laptop.
5. Make sure you have up to date and effective anti-virus. If you see an error message saying something along the lines of “your subscription has expired”, then it means it is no longer getting updates and so is effectively useless. Paid anti-virus systems are generally better but if you are short of money there are some free systems available. Contact us for advice.
6. If your charger (power cable) becomes visibly damaged (Figure 2), noisy or hot then replace it immediately. Damaged chargers can hurt your laptop and may provide other hazards.
7. When you attach your laptop to the charger, plug it into your laptop first before you turn the power on to the charger. It is very rare, but if you fail to do this you cause potentially damaging electrical arcing. When you unplug it, reverse the process - cut the power first and then disconnect the charger from the laptop.
8. If your laptop’s housing becomes damaged (Figure 3), you should take it to your local computer technician for a check. Most damage will be superficial, but damage in certain areas such as near where your charger plugs in can have potentially terminal consequences for the laptop if you do not act upon it.
9. If you have to wiggle and manoeuvre your charger where it plugs into the laptop to get it to connect properly, seek help from your local computer technician. This is likely to get worse over time. In extreme cases, you may permanently damage the computer by continuing to do this.



Figure 1: Example of Laptop Vents



Figure 2: Damaged Laptop Charger



Figure 3: Laptop Housing Damage