



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Denkleiers • Leading Minds • Dikgopoló tša Dihlalefi

# LAPTOP SUPPORT GUIDE

Physical Device Care

Student IT Hub @ University of Pretoria  
[studentithub@tuks.co.za](mailto:studentithub@tuks.co.za)

## Contents

	1
Caring for your physical Laptop	3
1. Get Padded Protection for Your Laptop	3
2. Be Good to Your Battery	3
3. Be Careful Around Your Computer	4
4. Be patient. And Don't Run Too Much at Once	4
5. Cleaning Your Computer	4
6. Do not use your computer in a room where animals are.	10
7. Protect the LCD display monitor.	10
8. Hold and lift the computer by its base, not by its LCD display (the screen)	10
9. Don't pull on the power cord.	11
10. Don't roll your chair over the computer cord.	11
11. Be sure to plug accessory devices into their proper slots.	12
12. Don't expose your laptop to rapid temperature changes	12
13. Don't leave your laptop in a car.	12
14. Avoid placing heavy materials, such as books, on top of your laptop.	13
15. Use a properly sized laptop case.	13
16. Only use and store your laptop in a well-ventilated area.	14
17. Don't use your laptop on the bed	14
18. Do not smoke near laptop	14
References	15
Images	15

# Caring for your physical Laptop

## 1. Get Padded Protection for Your Laptop



Pick up a laptop sleeve, laptop case or a laptop book bag to carry around your computer. You can even consider making your own out of a sleeping bag or pillow. This is because dropping your laptop a couple of times could result in crashing it, and wiping out all your important documents. Not only that but obviously your laptop's components can break if the laptop is knocked without any protection, that is the screen or plastic pieces of the laptop.

## 2. Be Good to Your Battery



Laptop batteries will only last for a few years. So, try not to leave your battery charging all the time. When the battery is done charging, unplug the power cable, or remove the battery and keep the charger plugged in if your battery is easily removable. You should also charge your battery fully before unplugging the power cable, and also use the battery fully before recharging. Think of your laptop's battery like your phone battery and charge it in the same manner.

### 3. Be Careful Around Your Computer



You will not believe how many computers are ruined with accidents involving food and drinks. Use a canteen or bottle with a lid to avoid spilling drinks onto your computer. Be careful when eating foods with sauces because a simple spill could cause a big problem. Crumbs landing in the keyboard from your food can also cause the laptop keyboard to break or not work correctly.

### 4. Be patient. And Don't Run Too Much at Once

Every program requires a bit of your CPU. Be patient if you're trying to run a program, and it's taking a while. Do not immediately hit the power button every time your computer freezes for a minute. Wait a while and then use your intuition to assess whether or not you should reboot.

Try not to run too many programs and tabs at once. Close any programs and tabs you don't need to avoid freezing your computer.

### 5. Cleaning Your Computer



It's important to clean your computer to prevent dust from decreasing airflow, which can make your computer overheat. You can pick up Air Dusters to clean the dust regularly. Be very gentle when cleaning your computer.

1. **Clear surface dust with a microfiber cloth.** Using the cloth, fold it so that you can unfold as you go and always wipe with a clean side. Gently wipe across the surface of your laptop to remove dust and other particles. Anything that does not come off must be cleaned with a Q-tip or a very slightly wet piece of cloth. Make sure that if you dampen your cloth, the cloth must not drip with water when you push it down against a surface.



2. **Invest in a screen-cleaning kit for dirtier screens.** These are similar to the substance used to clean reading glasses. Using a microfiber cloth, as to not scratch the surface, place some of the cleaning fluid and gently wipe the laptop's screen clean.
3. **Wipe in a circular motion to remove streaks.** After you are done cleaning, take a dry microfiber cloth and gently rub your screen in a circular motion. This will eliminate any streaks or particles left behind by the cleaning cloth.



4. **Shake the loose dust out of your keyboard.** Open the folding screen if applicable and hold the device firmly and securely, turn the device upside down so that the keyboard faces a table, then gently shake the device so that the larger loose particles of dust and other materials fall out. You do not want to shake the device so hard that the screen moves too much. If you cannot get particles out via shaking then a tweezer should be used to clean those out.



5. **Vacuum loose dust and hair from the keyboard.**

Note that it is important to have your device switched off before using a vacuum. Only

- Using the smallest attachment from your vacuum, start by holding it close to your keyboard without directly harming or scratching the keyboard. Move the vacuum head from the left to the right side and from top to bottom of the keyboard. Make sure that you cover each section of your keyboard.
- If you do not have a vacuum cleaner, you can get a can of compressed air from a computer store. If you do decide to use compressed air, hold it at an angle that will allow the dust and other types of debris to get blown out of the keyboard.



6. **Use a pencil eraser to remove grime from the keycaps.**

- As you use your laptop, dirt may build up on the keycaps. To remove this, you may take a pencil eraser and use it to remove this dirt by gently rubbing it on the keycaps.
- After you've done that, you may vacuum over the keys one more time to remove the eraser shavings that will have been left on your keys during the process.



7. **Clean spaces between keys with a cotton swab.** Dirt can build up between the keys. If the keyboard is very dirty, dipping the cotton swab in rubbing alcohol will help remove thick grime. Only slightly wet the swab. Don't press down too hard. Rubbing alcohol also works for cleaning grime from the top of the keys.



8. **Blow debris from ports with compressed air.** Ports of the device are fragile and can be damaged easily. For that reason the only way one should clean out the ports of the device is with the use of compressed air. Using compressed will effectively remove particles from the ports while keeping the ports safe from any damage.





9. **Use rubbing alcohol for sticky residue.** Spots can accumulate on the plastic of your device's case from grime or other sticky substances. One can remove these imperfections with the use of a very small drop of rubbing alcohol on a cotton ball. This will easily clean the spot from the case.



10. **Polish the surface with a microfiber cloth.** Dusting your computer or device regularly is an excellent way of ensuring that the device stays in mint condition as dust can have a negative effect on the hardware components in the device. The use of a microfiber cloth allows for effective dusting and cleaning of the outside of the device, keeping it looking brand new.



## 6. Do not use your computer in a room where animals are.

Animals shed a lot of hair, so it is ideal to use your laptop in a room without animals since their hair and the dust they usually carry can get sucked up by the fans in your laptop.

It is also important to note that animals could accidentally step on the laptop or knock something onto your laptop so make sure to keep pets at a safe distance if you do not have an available pet free room.

## 7. Protect the LCD display monitor.



Before closing your laptop, ensure that your screen is clear from any type of objects that may harm the display. This can be a pencil, ear-phones or any other kind of small object. When closing your lid, ensure that equal amount of pressure is used on the screen to ensure that the hinges don't bend. To ensure that even pressure is used, both your hands can be used or one hand in the middle of the display.

## 8. Hold and lift the computer by its base, not by its LCD display (the screen)

When moving the device around it is often tempting to lift the device by the LCD display; however, the hinges that fold the screen up and down were not designed to carry the weight of the rest of the device and can lead to the LCD screen breaking. So always ensure that when moving the device, you must ensure you have a firm grasp on the bottom half (the part that has the keyboard).

## 9. Don't pull on the power cord.

When plugging your laptop charger in or when pulling the plug out of the socket, it is important to not put any pressure on the cord itself. Make sure that all pressure is applied to the plug itself and not on the cable as this could damage the cable and render it useless.

Also be careful not to bump or knock on the plug since this could also damage the plug and/or socket.



## 10. Don't roll your chair over the computer cord.

To avoid rolling your chair over your computer cord/cable, it is best to keep it as far from your chair legs as possible. The following can help also help with this problem:

- Make use of a command cord bundler
- Make use of reusable rubber twists



## 11. Be sure to plug accessory devices into their proper slots.

Always look at the symbols on the laptop carefully before inserting devices. Jamming a USB device into your HDMI port may cause damage to the HDMI port rendering it useless. Always check the port that you are plugging your device into before applying any force whatsoever.



## 12. Don't expose your laptop to rapid temperature changes

When bringing your laptop indoors during winter, don't turn it on immediately. Instead, let it warm to room temperature first. This will avoid any potential for damage to the hardware from condensation forming inside the machine. Do not leave any device in direct sunlight as this will, especially if it's on, cause the device to overheat which could result in the device not working at all anymore as the components would, literally speaking, be fried.

## 13. Don't leave your laptop in a car.



To prevent any possible damage resulting from the weather or loss of your laptop by theft, it is best to not leave it in your car.

14. Avoid placing heavy materials, such as books, on top of your laptop.



Placing heavy materials on top of your laptop when it is closed or open can damage not only the screen but also the keyboard causing some keys to stop functioning. If there is a limited amount of space your laptop can be placed on top of heavy items but be careful and make sure that the laptop is not at risk of being bumped and that it cannot fall.

15. Use a properly sized laptop case.



When carrying around your laptop, always use an appropriate size laptop bag/case. This is important to protect your laptop. If a smaller sized laptop bag is used it can squeeze and potentially harm your laptop. If a larger bag is used, it can happen that your laptop can move around inside the bag/case.

## 16. Only use and store your laptop in a well-ventilated area.

When you are using your laptop, do so in a place that has a constant air-circulation. Lots of people ruin their laptops by using them in enclosed areas and thus cause the laptop to overheat.

## 17. Don't use your laptop on the bed



Repeated use of a laptop on the bed will cause the fans to suck up the dust and debris in the bed, ultimately blocking the fan. If the laptop begins a task that requires a lot of system resources, the laptop will heat up and try to increase the fan speed to compensate. If the laptop is on the bed, couch, or blanket, then the fans will be blocked from bringing fresh air into the system, which will lead to the laptop to overheat.

## 18. Do not smoke near laptop



Smoking can cause damage to computers.

Tar from the smoke combines with dust and causes a sticky residue to form on the internal components of the computer, especially the cooling system. This build-up will continue to grow, blocking ventilation holes and insulating components, affecting the performance.

## References

### Images

- <https://www.wikihow.com/Clean-a-Laptop>