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GETTING STARTED

SPECIFYING YOUR BUILD

Consider what tasks you want to accomplish with your new computer. Here are a few questions to ask before specifying your build:

- Are you going to browse the Internet?
- Are you going to use office productivity software (e.g. Microsoft Office applications)?
- Are you going to use video or image editing software?
- Are you going to play video games?
- Are you going to be multi-tasking (multiple applications open at the same time)?
- What is your monitor resolution and how many monitors will you have?

Most low-end computer hardware available today is more than adequate for handling Internet browsing and office productivity. You will want to consider high-end components for graphically intensive activities, such as gaming and video editing.

For multi-tasking, you need more RAM. As a general guideline, 6 to 16 GB will accomplish most multi-tasking with no issue. If you are going to have more than 4GB of RAM, however, you will need a 64-bit operating system. Also, consider how much RAM your motherboard can handle and in what configuration.

For games, video editing, and image editing, you will need to consider your processor and graphics card. Your processor should have multiple cores and integrated HD graphics. Consider the processor speed and number of cores. You can find these specifications on the manufacturer's website and most retail sites, such as Newegg.

To supplement your processor, you will need to choose a graphics card. This is arguably the most important component in your computer, and the one you will upgrade most frequently. For graphically intensive activities, high-resolution monitors, and multiple monitors, you will need a high-end card and these tend to run from $300 to $2,000. To help set a reasonable budget, compare performance between cards, and avoid over-paying, do a little research. A great resource for comparing both performance and price is www.videocardbenchmark.net.

***Tips**:*

- ✓ *Match your CPU to the socket type on your motherboard.*
- ✓ *Take note of the power requirements for your graphics card.*
- ✓ *Be sure to buy a large enough power supply.*
- ✓ *Buy a case that matches your motherboard form factor (i.e. ATX, micro-ATX, etc.).*

Storage is another consideration for your build. Solid-state drives (SSDs) offer many benefits over hard disk drives (HDDs) including performance and longevity, but they are more costly and the storage space is much smaller. A popular option is an SSD storing the operating system and most commonly used applications, while a larger HDD stores games, photos, videos, and music. For removable storage, a Blu-ray drive or DVD drive is still handy to have.

For help choosing compatible components, www.pcpartpicker.com is another great resource.

TOOLS

Once you have all of your components, you will need to gather your tools.

You will need:

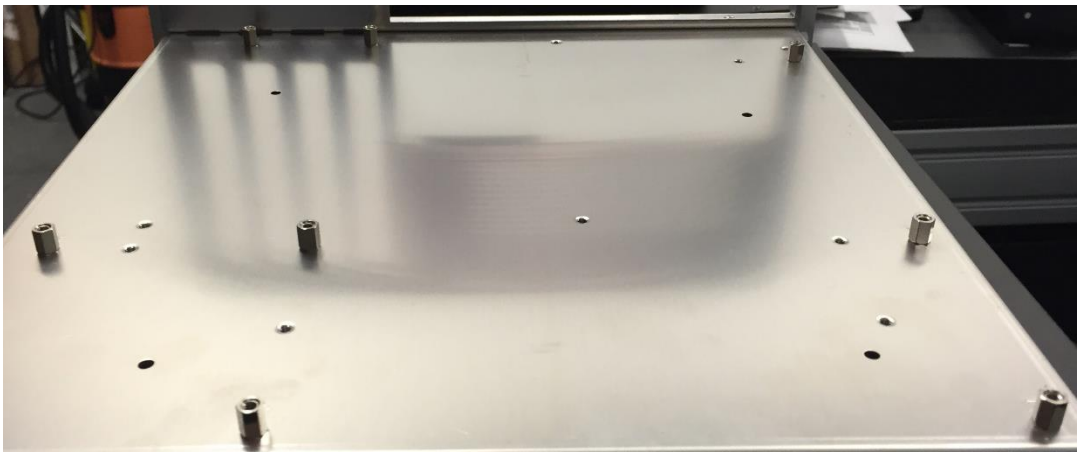
- ✓ #2 Philips screwdriver
- ✓ Medium and small zip ties
- ✓ Flush cutters (diagonal cutters will also work)
- ✓ Anti-static wrist strap or mat
- ✓ Clean, flat work surface

***Remember**:*

> *Computer components are vulnerable to electro-static discharge (static electricity). To prevent damage to your components, invest in an anti-static wrist strap or mat. When wearing the wrist strap, attach the clip to any metal part of the case.*

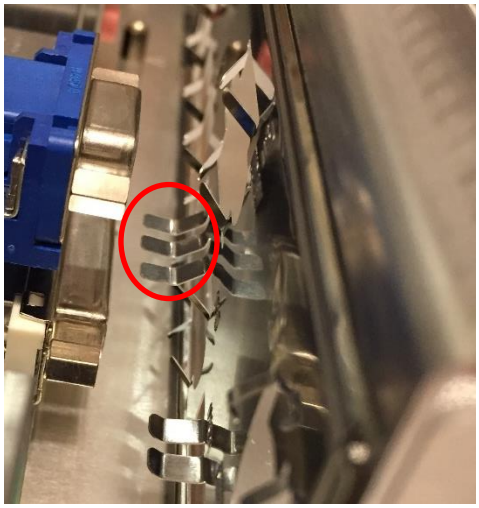
INSTALLING THE MOTHERBOARD

1. Place your case on a flat work surface and remove the panels to access the motherboard mount. Remove the motherboard mount, if it is removable.
2. Screw in the standoffs. The standoff screws will be included with your case.
   - ✓ *Consult your motherboard's documentation for the screw pattern for your motherboard.*



3. Install the motherboard backplane. It will snap into place from inside the case.

4. Align the motherboard with the backplane and standoff screws.
    - ⚠ *There are metal tabs on the backplane. Be sure these tabs do not slide into the connectors!*



5. Using the motherboard screws provided with the case, secure the motherboard to the case.
    - ⚠ *Do not overtighten the screws!*
    - ⚠ *Consult your case documentation to determine the correct screws.*
6. Once you have secured the motherboard to the case, you are ready to install the CPU.