

10 Tips to Speed Up Windows 10

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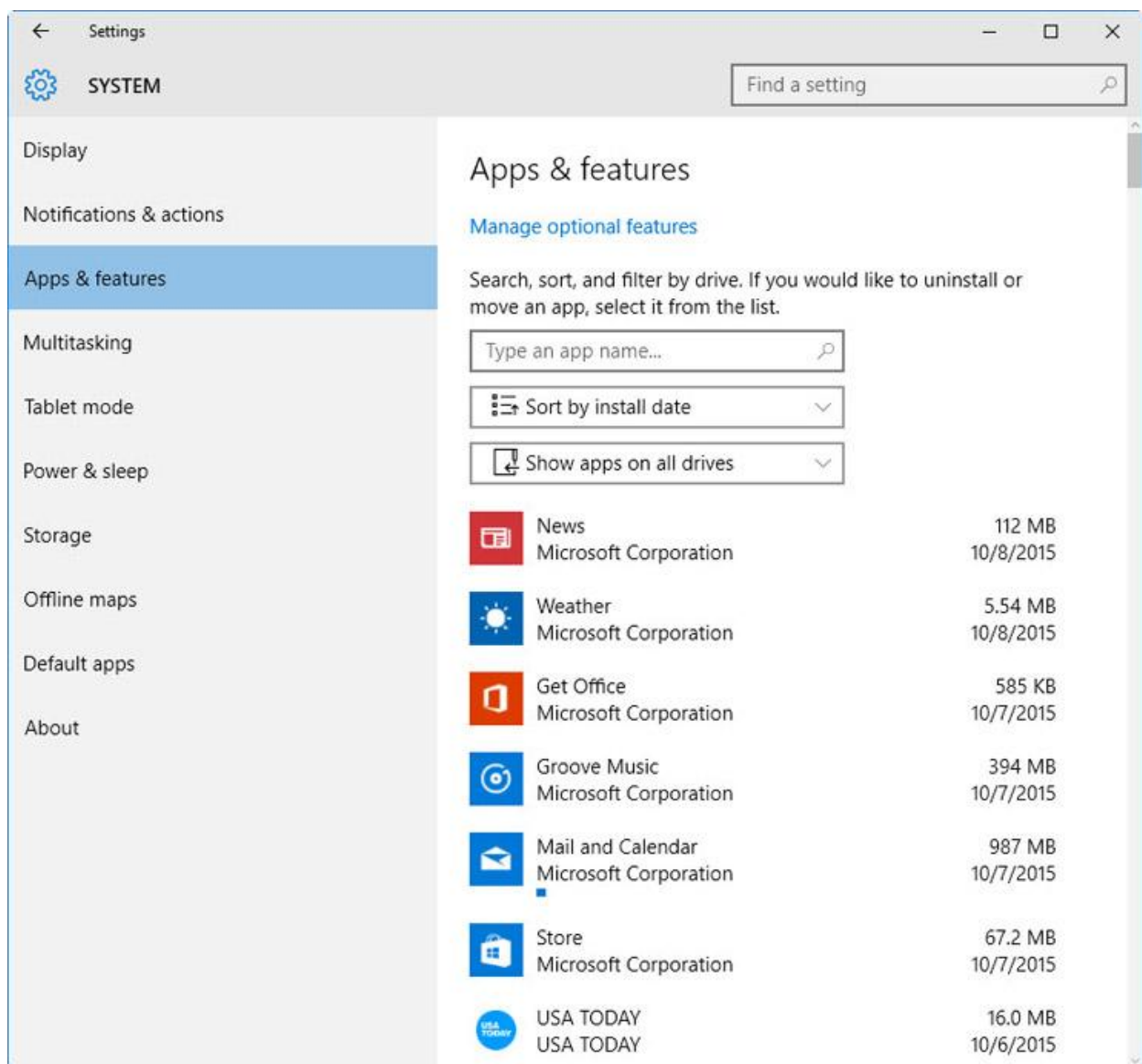
By Michael Muchmore March 22, 2016 10:10AM EST March 22, 2016

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As PC hardware continues to get faster, so does software, and Windows 10 is no exception. This is especially true of startup time: If you upgrade from Windows 7 or earlier, you'll be pleasantly surprised by how fast your machine is ready for action. But there are other performance factors to consider after you're up and running. We've compiled ten tips, many of which are perennial old standbys in the Windows performance game.

The problem with many Windows speedup stories is that they tell you to turn off some of the operating system's more charming features such as visual animations. Most of the tips here show you ways you can speed up your Windows 10 system without compromising its appearance and functionality. Most are free, but some involve spending a little cash on software or hardware. For those with older, lower-power machines who want a speed boost but don't care about extra goodies, a couple of the tips towards the end can boost system performance at the expense of some bells and whistles.

If you have your own tips for speeding up Windows 10, please don't hesitate to post your suggestions in the comment section below.



1. Uninstall Crapware

That extra preinstalled software installed by PC makers continues to be an issue with new computers. I recently was working with a low-cost Lenovo PC that had nearly 20 so-called helper programs installed, and these would occasionally and unwantedly pop up and interrupt what I was doing on the computer.

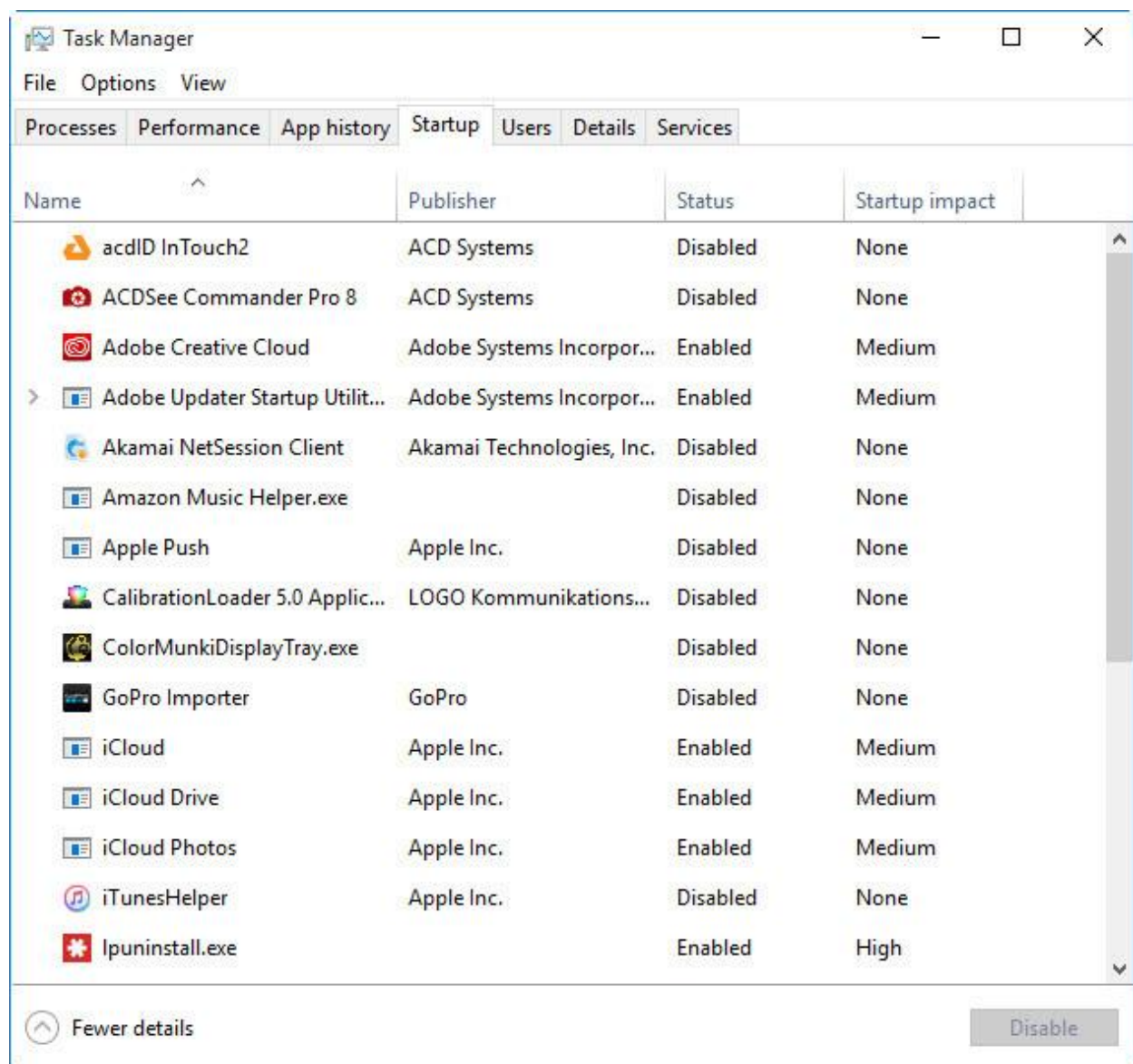
Here's how: Tap on the Start button (by default all the way in the lower-left corner of the display), then on *All apps* at the bottom, and then simply right-click on the offender and choose Uninstall. This will immediately uninstall. You can also *right-click* on the Windows logo Start button, and choose the top choice Programs and Features. You can also simply type Programs in the Cortana *Ask me anything* box next to the Start button.

You can usually find the culprits by sorting the list of installed apps on the name of your PC Maker. When you've found junk apps you don't want, simply select them and click Uninstall. Unfortunately, you can only remove one at a time, so set aside a half hour or so for this project. Don't forget to take the hatchet to apps you installed yourself but no longer want, and for software you don't want that was installed alongside software you did want.

Keep in mind, with Windows 10 there are two kinds of applications, traditional desktop ones and modern Windows Store apps. To remove the latter, go to the Settings app's Apps & Features page. There, you'll see both kinds of apps, while the good ole Control Panel only

includes good ole desktop programs. In either you can sort by size, date installed, or name, or search for a particular app.

The reason this helps performance is that many programs load processes at boot time and take up valuable RAM and CPU cycles. While you're in the Programs and Features section of Control, you can also click Turn Windows Features On or Off and scan the list to see if there's anything you don't use. You might also try software like PCDecrapifier and Revo Uninstaller [utilities](#). For more help on what to remove, read [How to Clean Crapware From a New PC](#).

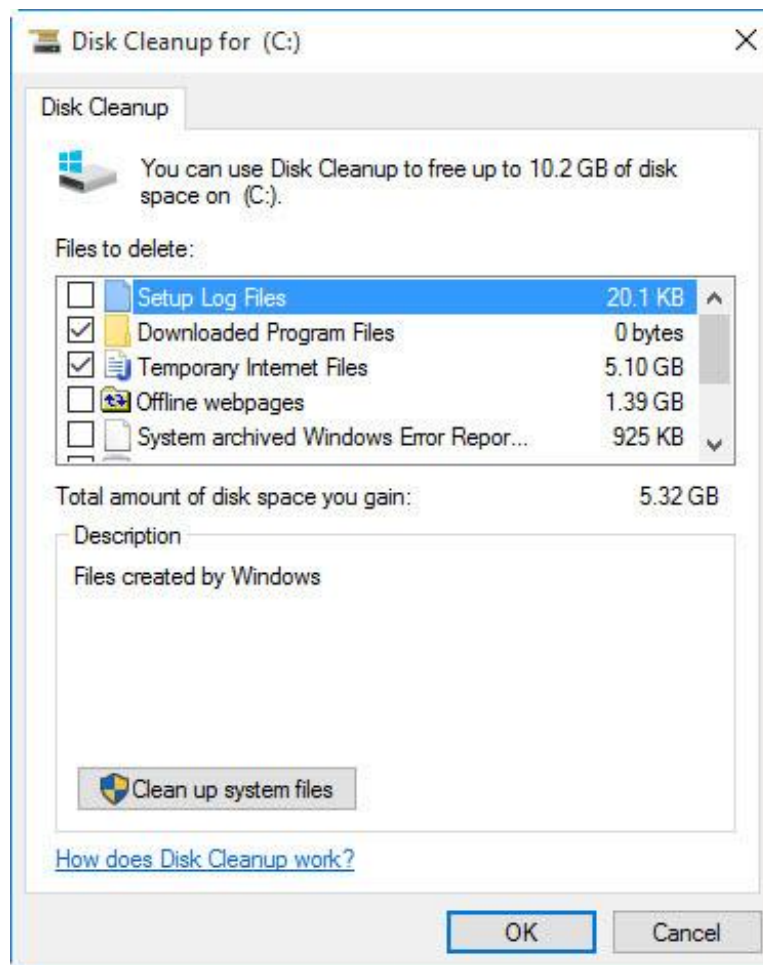


2. Limit Startup Processes

A lot of programs install side processes that run every time you start your PC, and some of them are not things you need running on your system all the time. Compared with Windows 7, in which you had to run the MSCONFIG utility, Windows 10 (and Windows 8.x before it) gives you a new, easier way to limit what runs at startup—from the updated Task Manager.

The easiest way to invoke the Task Manager is by pressing Ctrl-Shift-Esc. Switch to the Startup tab, and you'll see all the programs that load at Windows startup. The dialog box even has a column that shows you the Startup impact for each. The Status column shows

whether the program is enabled to run at startup or not. You can right-click on any entry to change this status. It's usually fairly easy to see things you don't want to run. For example, if you never use iTunes, you probably don't need iTunesHelper to be running all the time.



3. Clean Up Your Disk

From the Start menu, type Disk Cleanup. This opens the trusty Disk Cleanup utility that's been part of Windows for several generations of the OS. Disk Cleanup finds unwanted junk and files such as temporary files, offline Web pages, and installer files on your PC and offers to delete them all at once. You may even find that your Recycle Bin is bulging at the seams: Mine had 1.47GB I didn't know was there! This will generally only have a noticeable effect on speed if your drive is getting close to full, however. If you don't have disk defragmentation scheduled regularly, set that up in the Optimize Drives tool, which you can find by typing its name in the Cortana search box next to the Start button. Another great tool for PC cleanup is [Iolo System Mechanic 14](#), our Editors' Choice for PC tune-up utilities.



4. Add More RAM

Windows 10 isn't as much of a hog as earlier versions of the OS, but more memory is always a way to speed up PC operations. For a lot of today's Windows devices, such as the Surface convertible tablets, however, adding RAM isn't an option. Gaming and business laptops often still allow RAM upgrades, but that's becoming rarer by the year. The new, slimmer ultrabooks and convertibles are usually fixed. If you still use a desktop tower, this article can show you [how to add RAM](#). The bigger RAM makers' (Crucial, Kingston, Corsair) websites all offer product finders that show you which type of RAM your PC takes, and prices are pretty reasonable. I found 8GB high-performance DDR3 RAM for under \$40 on Newegg.com.



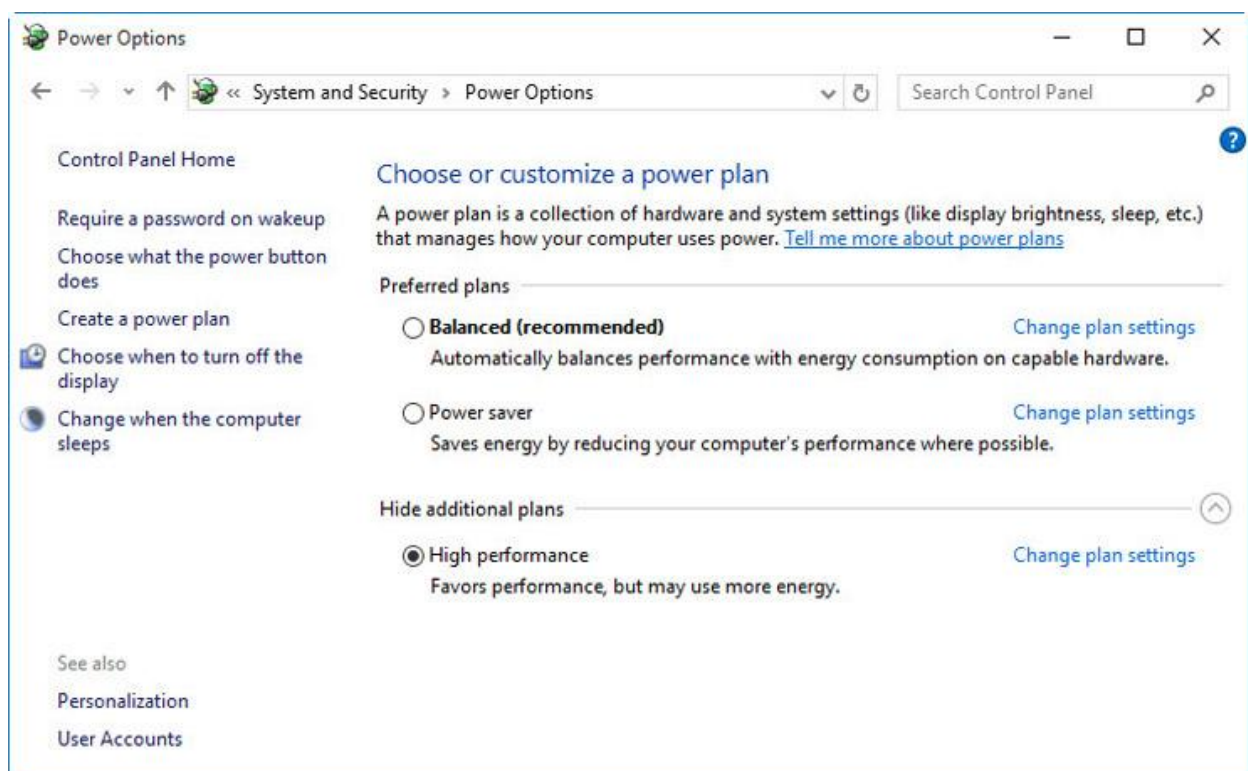
5. Install an SSD Startup Drive

This past year, I installed a solid-state (SSD) startup drive on my home desktop PC, and the result was a remarkable speedup. And not just for Windows startup, but for loading and using demanding applications such as [Adobe Photoshop Lightroom](#). If you use a laptop, this may also be an option. For system speedup, it makes sense to replace your internal startup hard drive, but an external SSD with a USB 3.0 connection can also give you a speed boost in applications that use a lot of storage. For more info, you can check out PCMag's article, [The Best SSDs](#) and [How to Buy an SSD](#), or look through our recent [storage reviews](#).



6. Check for Viruses and Spyware

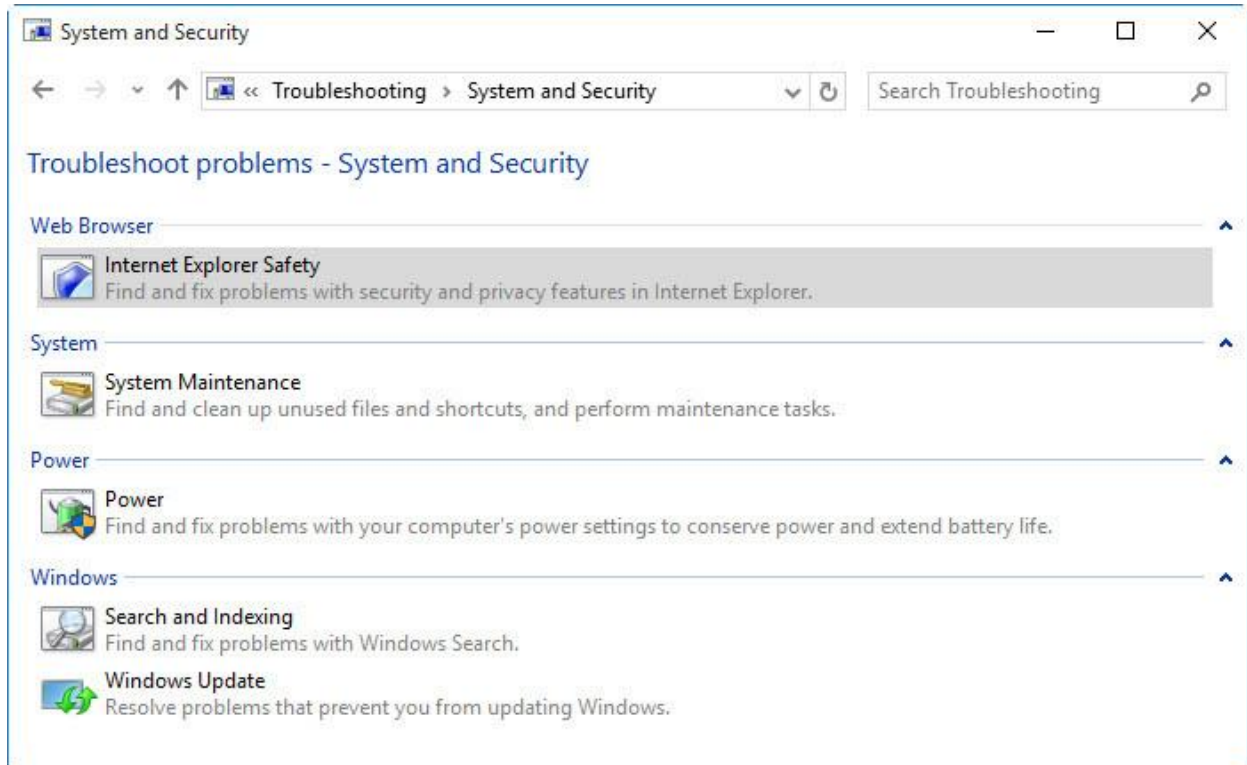
You can run the built-in Windows Defender or a third-party app to do this, but you're best served by PCMag security guru Neil Rubenking's top pick among malware-cleanup programs, Malwarebytes Anti-Malware—it's free! But don't forget to use ongoing anti-malware protection, too. Some of the AV products have a lighter footprint on system performance than others, and the lightest of all, according to Rubenking, is Webroot SecureAnywhere AntiVirus.



7. Change Power Settings to Maximum Performance

Of course, this isn't a good choice if you want to save electricity, but it could boost your

computing. Head to Control Panel / System and Security / Power Options. From here, click on the dropdown arrow on the right side and choose High Performance.

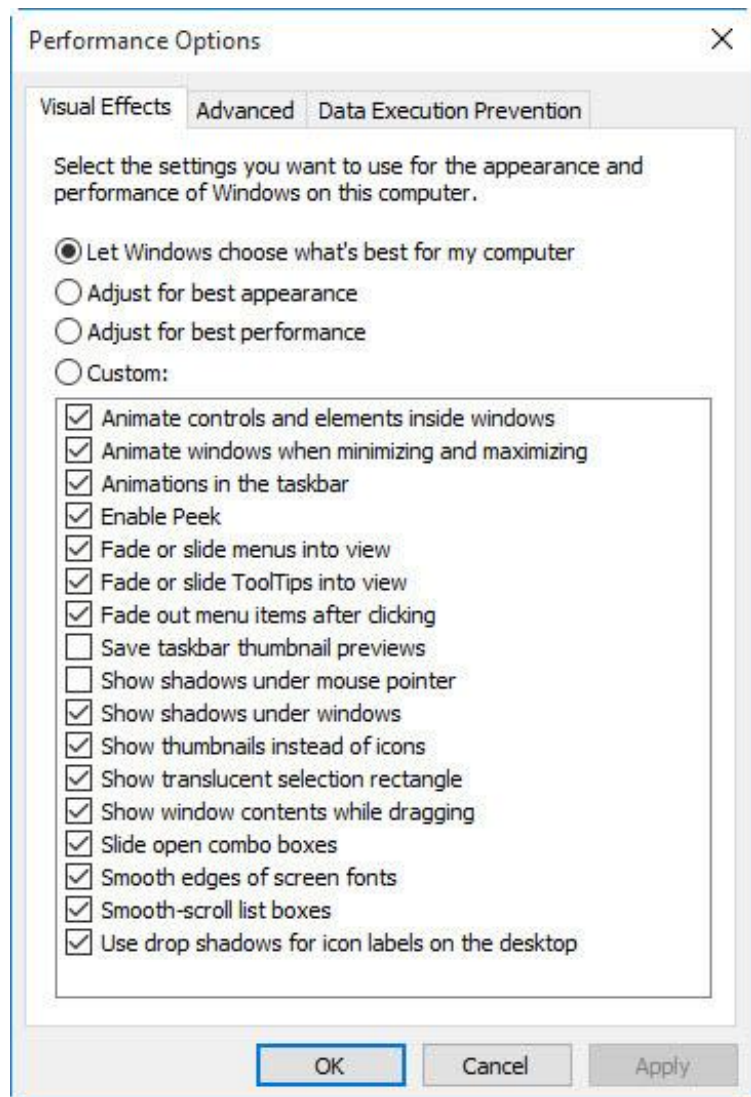


8. Use the Performance Troubleshooter

In Cortana's search box next to the Start button, type *troubleshooting* and under System and Security, you'll see the choice *Check for performance issues*. Run the troubleshooter and it may find the root cause of your slowdown. For good measure, run through the other troubleshooters, including System Maintenance, Search and Indexing, Hardware and Sounds, and Programs.

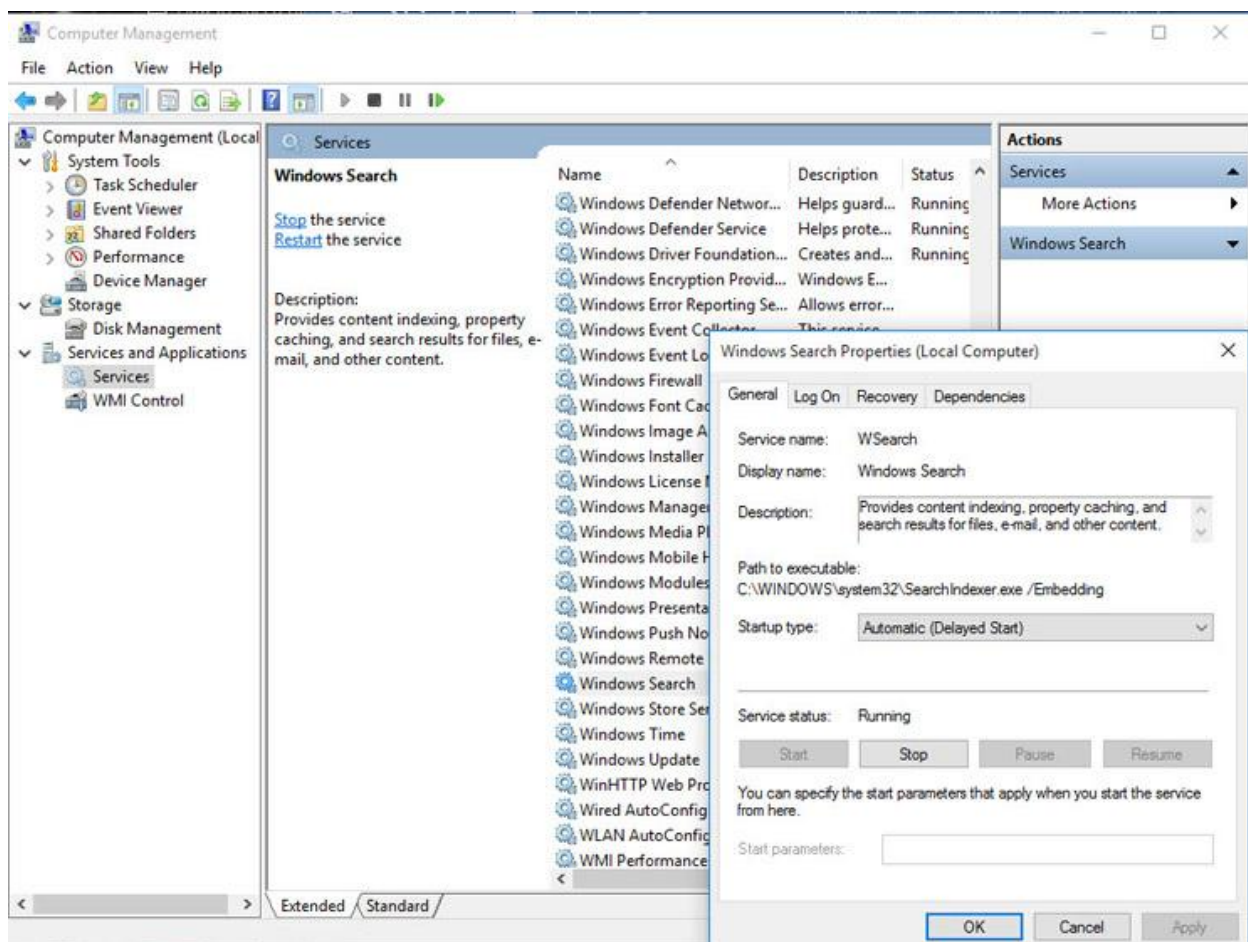
9. Change Appearance in Performance Options Dialog

You can easily get to this by typing *adjust appearance* in Cortana. In the dialog, you can use the radio button at the top labeled *Adjust for best performance* or select which eye-candy features you can live without from the long list of check boxes below these choices. If you do choose the overall best-performance button, you'll lose all of the visual effects. For example, you won't see the contents of a window you're dragging move, but rather just a rectangle representing the window's edges. Keeping the effects that you enjoy checked in the dialog is probably a better way to go.



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10. Turn Off Search Indexing

Especially for lower-powered PCs, search indexing can eat up system resources, if only temporarily. If you do a lot of searching, this won't appeal to you, as some searches will be slower. To turn off indexing, open the Indexing Options Control Panel window (you can also just type *index* in the Start button search box, and you should see Indexing Options at the top of the result list), click Modify and remove locations being indexed and file types, too.

If you want to leave search indexing on, but find that it occasionally slows you down, you can stop its process when you need extra speed. Right-click on Computer either in the Start menu or on the desktop, choose Manage. Then double-click Services and Applications, then Services. Find Windows Search, and double click on that. From this Properties dialog, you can choose a Startup type of Manual or Disabled to have the process silent by default. The new *Automatic (Delayed Start)* startup type according to Microsoft help, "is preferred over the Automatic startup type because it helps reduce the effect on the system's overall boot performance." That was the default on my upgraded Windows 10 PC.