

Before You Buy a New Computer

A Simple Checklist to Help You Choose the Right One

Buying a new computer can feel overwhelming, considering all the options available. This checklist will help you determine what you actually need and avoid common mistakes.

Remember: Take your time — there's likely no rush!

Step 1: What Will You Use Your New Computer For?

Check all the tasks you plan to use your computer for. This will help determine how powerful your new computer will need to be.

- Email and web browsing
A basic computer is fine
- Video calls (Zoom, FaceTime, etc.)
You'll need a webcam and microphone
- Watching movies and streaming (Netflix, YouTube)
Look for a screen with good resolution
- Working from home (documents, spreadsheets)
Basic to mid-range works well
- Photo editing or organizing pictures
You'll need mid-range with good storage
- Video editing or graphic design
You'll need extra power and RAM
- Gaming
You'll need a dedicated graphics card
- Just the basics — nothing fancy
Save money with a basic model

Step 2: Desktop or Laptop?

Choose a **LAPTOP** if you:

- * Want to use it in different rooms or take it with you around town
- * Have limited desk space
- * Need it while traveling or visiting family
- * Want everything built-in (screen, keyboard, webcam)

Choose a DESKTOP if you:

- * Will always use it in the same spot
- * Want a larger screen for easier viewing
- * Need more power for less money
- * Want something easier to repair or upgrade later

Step 3: Windows, Mac, or Chromebook?

WINDOWS (Most Common)

- ✓ I want lots of choices at different price points
- ✓ I'm used to using Windows at work or other computers
- ✓ I need to run Windows specific software (check compatibility!)

MAC (Apple)

- ✓ I already have an iPhone or iPad and want them to work together (sync)
- ✓ I prefer Apple's security features, design, and user interface
- ✓ I'm willing to pay more for quality and longevity

CHROMEBOOK (Budget-Friendly)

- ✓ I mainly use the internet (email, browsing, streaming)
- ✓ I want something simple and affordable
- ✓ I don't need to install traditional software programs
- ✓ I'm a heavy user of Google's ecosystem (Gmail, Google Drive, etc.)

Step 4: Understanding Key Specifications

Don't worry — you don't need to be a tech expert. Here's what the important numbers mean:

RAM (Memory) — How many things you can do at once

- ➔ 4 GB
Very basic use only — may be slow
- ➔ 8 GB
Recommended for most people
- ➔ 16 GB or more
For heavy multitasking or creative work

Storage — How much you can save on the computer

- ➔ 128 GB
Very limited — only if you save everything in the cloud
- ➔ 256 GB
Okay for light use with some photos and documents
- ➔ 512 GB or more
Recommended for storing photos, videos, and applications on your device

Storage — Choosing the type of drive

- ➔ SSD vs HDD
SSD makes computers faster, quieter, and more reliable — worth the extra cost!

Processor (CPU) — The computer's brain

- ➔ Intel Core i3 or AMD Ryzen 3
Basic tasks
- ➔ Intel Core i5 or AMD Ryzen 5
Recommended for most people
- ➔ Intel Core i7/i9 or AMD Ryzen 7/9
For power users
- ➔ Apple M1/M2/M3 chip
Excellent for Mac users

Screen Size

- ➔ 13-14 inches
Portable, good for travel
- ➔ 15-16 inches
Popular balance of size and portability
- ➔ 17+ inches
Great for viewing, but heavy to carry
- ➔ 24-27 inches (desktop monitor)
Comfortable for everyday use

Step 5: Set Your Budget

- ➔ Under \$400
Basic Chromebook or very entry-level laptop
- ➔ \$400 - \$700
Decent laptop for everyday tasks
- ➔ \$700 - \$1,200
A sweet spot for most users - good quality with better specs
- ➔ \$1,200 - \$2,000
High performance or MacBook

- ➔ \$2,000+
Premium/professional machines

Pro Tip: Don't forget to budget for extras like a laptop bag, blue light screen protector, mouse and keyboard, port adapter, shipping and taxes, and extended warranty!

Step 6: Questions to Ask Before Buying

- * What is the return policy if I don't like it?
- * Does it come with a warranty? If so, how much?
- * Are key programs I require included, such as Windows or photo editing software?
- * Can I try it in the store before buying?
- * Does it have the ports I require, or will I need to buy an adapter?
- * Will someone help me set it up securely, or transfer my old files?
- * Are there any current or upcoming sales or promotions?

Step 7: Common Mistakes to Avoid

- X Buying the cheapest option
It may be slow and frustrating from day one
- X Getting way more than you need
Don't pay for power you won't use
- X Forgetting about the keyboard feel (chiclet, gaming...)
You'll type on it every day — make sure it's comfortable
- X Not checking the weight
If it's a laptop, pick it up! Heavy gets old fast
- X Skipping the reviews
Read what real buyers say online
- X Rushing the decision
Take your time — this is a multi-year investment

Notes & Action Items:

Need help repairing or replacing a device?

Contact: ParksvilleTech.com • Support@ParksvilleTech.com • 1 (250) 228 6520

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