



TOP 5 WAYS TO AVOID COSTLY COMPUTER REPAIRS

#1 PROTECT YOUR LAPTOPS FROM DROPS

Every week we get about 1-3 broken laptop screens in the shop, generally in need of repair due to being dropped or stepped on. Laptops are expensive pieces of equipment, and if you treat them with respect, a good one should last an average of 5-10 years.

That's why we don't recommend making a habit of leaving your laptop where it can be stepped on, or knocked off a surface by your pet, or fall easily from a purse or backpack. A well-fitting sleeve or case with plenty of cushioning does a great job of protecting your system in case it has an unfortunate encounter with gravity.

We also get inquiries about external monitors, but unlike laptops these are not generally economical to repair due to the labor involved and lack of available replacement parts. With monitors, you're generally better off buying a new one with a warranty.

Laptop screens are usually fairly easy to replace; prices can start around \$100-\$300 depending on its resolution, touchscreen capability, and market availability



#2 - CHOOSE A SOLID STATE DRIVE

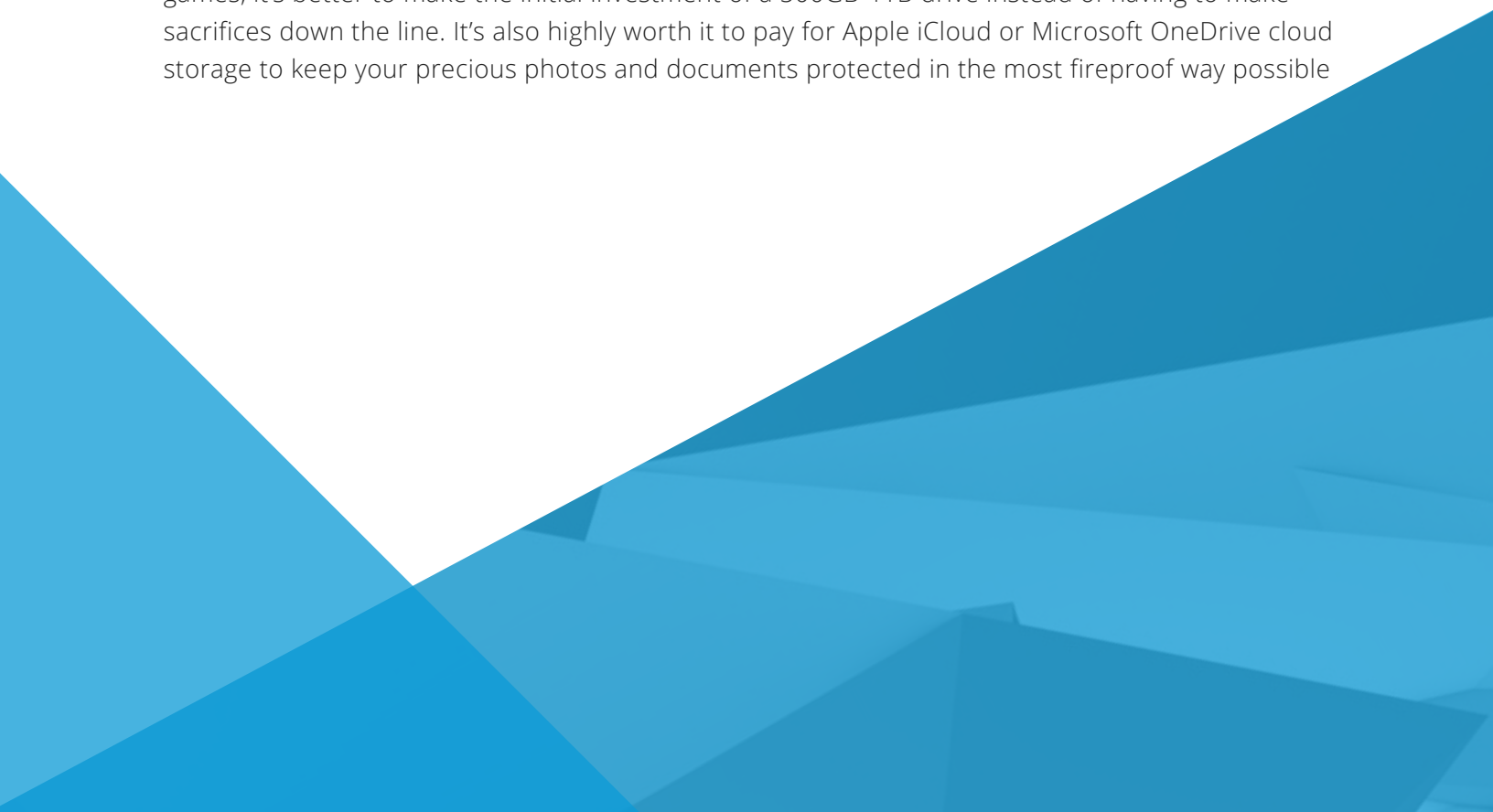
Mechanical hard drives are the slowest and least reliable storage media, and mechanical hard drive failure is the number one cause of your computer running slowly.

Any shop worth their weight has been recommending solid state drive upgrades for at least the last 5 years. Solid state drives are 20 times faster and more reliable than mechanical hard drives.

If you see a deal on a laptop that looks too good to be true, check the specs to see whether the hard drive is mechanical or solid state. The capacity is also important, for instance if the system only has a single 120GB solid state drive in it, that might not be enough for your needs.

Most people will use up that space very quickly, and because some solid state drives - like those in the newest Apple model computers - are soldered onto the main board on the system, they can't be removed and replaced easily or affordably. In this case it's important to have a cloud backup, because data recovery on these soldered drives can run between \$3,000-\$5,000.

A general rule of thumb is that if you anticipate needing a lot of room for photos, documents, or games, it's better to make the initial investment of a 500GB-1TB drive instead of having to make sacrifices down the line. It's also highly worth it to pay for Apple iCloud or Microsoft OneDrive cloud storage to keep your precious photos and documents protected in the most fireproof way possible

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#3 - AVOID PLASTIC LAPTOP HINGES

There's a joke in our industry that HP stands for Hinge Problems, because we see more HP laptops with hinge damage than any other brand.

While the "Business" level HP laptops that are in the \$600-\$1,000 price range are generally good systems, the more affordable consumer tier laptops in the \$200-\$500 price range tend to have a lot of manufacturing issues, particularly that the hinges are poorly attached to the plastic casing that contains your computer, and if the plastic surrounding the hinges breaks, it can quickly become an expensive repair. HP also does not warranty this type of problem and they won't repair it for free because they say that hinge failure is due to inappropriate handling by the user, rather than their own design flaw.

When shopping for a new laptop, take a look at the hinges and try avoid ones that are very thin and made of plastic, opting instead for one with an aluminum outer case, as these are generally a better construction and more resilient.



#4 - BUY NEW, NOT REFURBISHED

Unless you're buying a laptop refurbished directly from the manufacturer, like Apple, you should avoid refurbished laptops. We see countless refurbished computers come through the door that were purchased on Amazon or eBay, or even other computer shops, and a lot of the time when we open them up we are shocked by the sloppy work we find.

Not only do most third-party-refurbished computers come without a warranty, but because anyone can list an item for sale on platforms like eBay or Amazon, there's no quality guarantee on the parts that were used, meaning one issue can quickly cascade into many, more expensive, issues. A new system or a professionally refurbished system with a minimum 1-year warranty is always worth the additional upfront investment.



#5 - IF YOU SPILL ON YOUR LAPTOP, WORK FAST

If you spill liquid on your computer, power it off immediately and don't reach for the rice. Time is of the essence, so clean off any liquid that is on the exterior of the system, and place it open, upside down, on a clean dry towel.

Resist the urge to try to power it on, or you may fry it and ruin your chance of a successful repair and recovery of your data.

Get it into a shop ASAP so it can be fully disassembled, cleaned, dried out, reassembled and thoroughly tested.

One great option to decrease the chances of severe liquid damage is to purchase a thin silicone keyboard cover -- not only will this keep your keyboard clean of crumbs and dust, but it will also help prevent liquid from making it into the system if a liquid spill occurs. As an added bonus, these are generally only \$5-\$15, and worth every penny!

