# Cleaning Up Windows Systems

If your computer has slowed down or has been behaving badly, sometimes cleaning things up can give it a little more pep. This is something you can do yourself and don't need an IT Pro for. There are three different things we are looking at here: Uninstalling programs and apps, cleaning your browser cache and cookies, disk cleanup, and removing start up items.
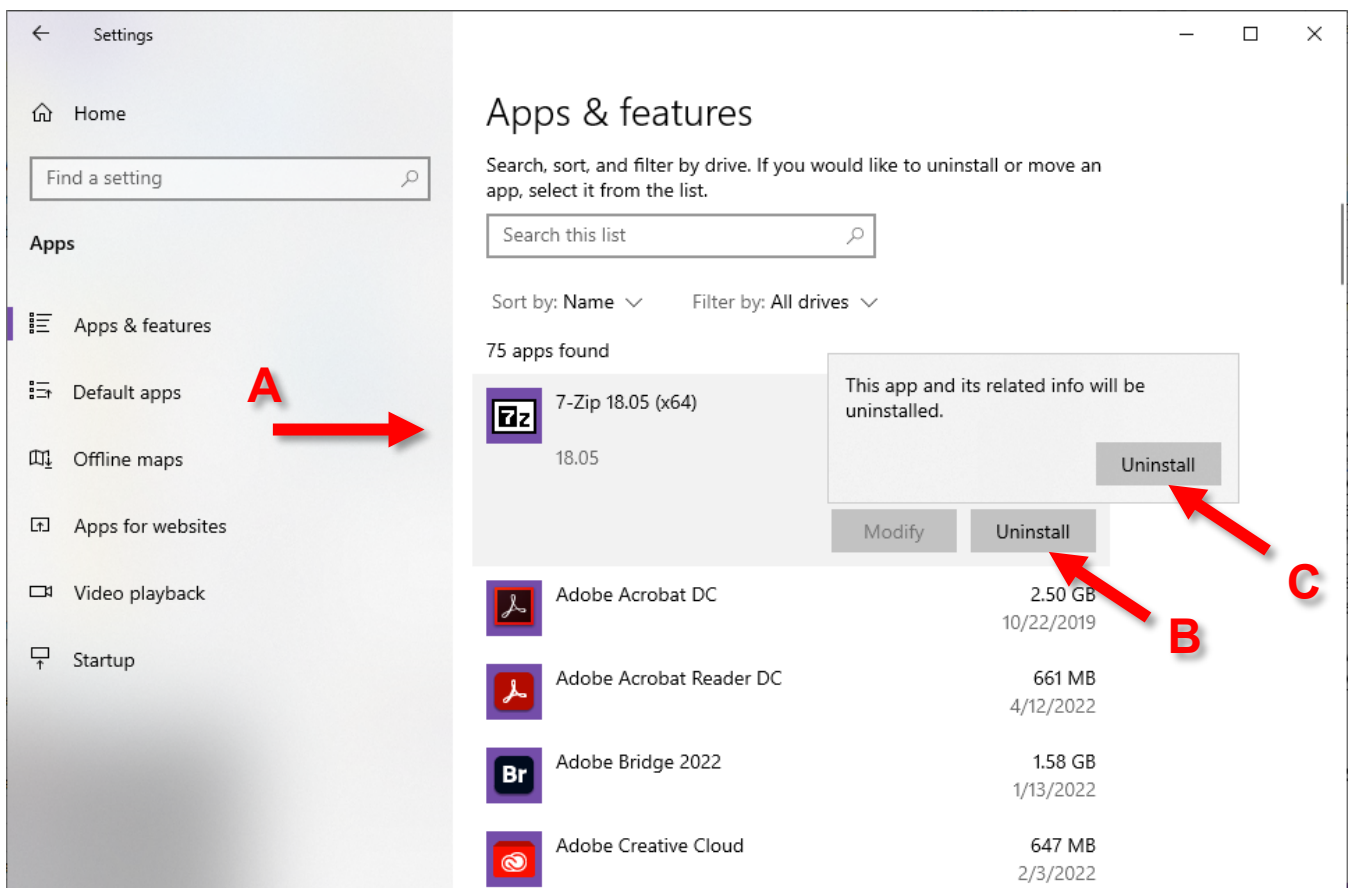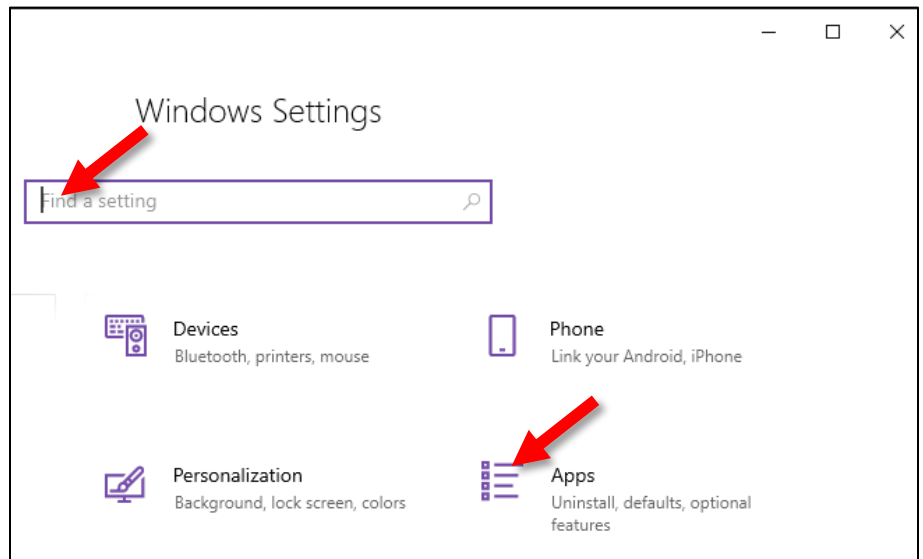
If your computer is extremely old, this probably won't help much, but it certainly won't hurt to try!

Cleaning Up Unused Programs

1. Click on the Start / Windows button and click **Settings** icon (gear).
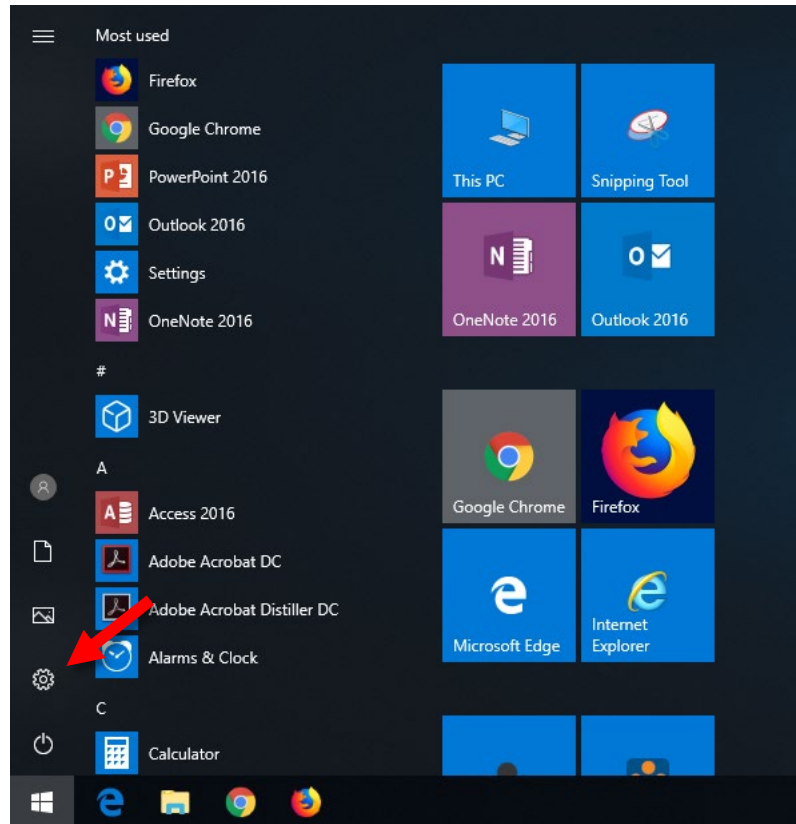
2. In the Windows Settings window click the **Apps** button. You can also search for **Apps** in the **Find a setting** search box.
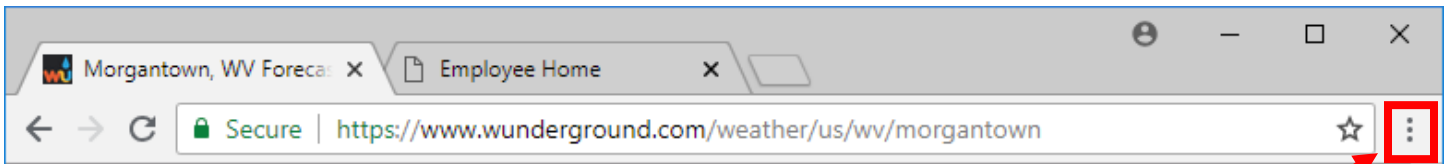
Windows Settings

Find a setting

Devices
Bluetooth, printers, mouse

Phone
Link your Android, iPhone

Personalization
Background, lock screen, colors

Apps
Uninstall, defaults, optional features

Settings

Home

Find a setting

Apps

Apps & features

Default apps

Offline maps

Apps for websites

Video playback

Startup

Apps & features

Search, sort, and filter by drive. If you would like to uninstall or move an app, select it from the list.

Search this list

Sort by: Name ∨   Filter by: All drives ∨

75 apps found

7z 7-Zip 18.05 (x64)

18.05

This app and its related info will be uninstalled.

Uninstall

Modify   Uninstall

A

B

C

Adobe Acrobat DC   2.50 GB
10/22/2019

Adobe Acrobat Reader DC   661 MB
4/12/2022

Br Adobe Bridge 2022   1.58 GB
1/13/2022

Adobe Creative Cloud   647 MB
2/3/2022

3. In the the left pane select Apps & Features and scroll through the programs. If you're not sure about a program, google it. The results should tell you what the program is to help you decide if you want to remove it.)
4. Once you have found a program you want to remove, click on the program in the list. (**A**)
5. Click the **Uninstall** button. (**B**)
6. In the warning dialog that appears, click **Uninstall**. (**C**)
7. Different programs will have different options for uninstalling. Some will just go away, others will make you answer questions to complete the uninstall.
8. Go through the list and one at a time delete all the programs you no longer user or never used.

Cleaning Up Browser Cache and Cookies

1. If a web browser is slow or behaving weirdly, you can clean up cache and cookies. **NOTE**! This will delete all your saved logins, so make sure you know all your user names and passwords!!
2. Open the web browser.
3. Open browser settings. (See below)
4. Clear your browsing data following the instructions for whatever browser you use. (See below)

Chrome

Options

To Access Your Browser Settings

1. Click the **Options** and from the menu, select **Settings**.

To Clear Cache

1. In the left pane of your browser settings, select **Privacy & Security**
2. Click **Clear browsing data** and in the pop-up window, set the Time Range as desired, select the items to be deleted, and click **Clear data**.

To Clear Saved Passwords

1. In the left pane of the browser settings, select **Autofill**.
2. In the main section select P**asswords**.
3. Click **Check Passwords** to clear any saved passwords.

Microsoft Edge
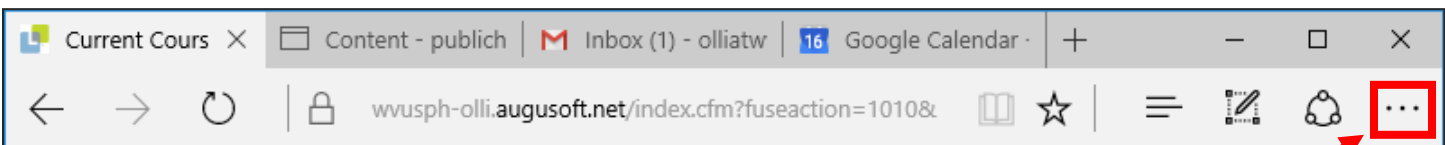
Options

To Access Your Browser Settings

1. Click the **Options** (More) button in the right corner of the window.
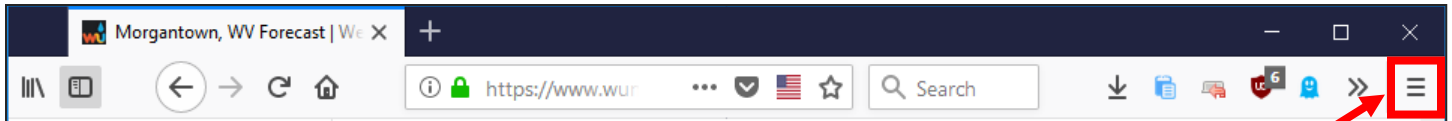2. From the drop down menu select **Settings**.

To Clear Cache

1. In the left pane of your **Browser Settings**, select **Privacy, search, and services**.
2. Select **Clear browsing data**.
3. Click **Choose what to clear**.
4. Remove some or all of the data.

To Clear Saved Passwords

1. In the left pane, select **Profiles**.
2. Select **Passwords**.
3. Toggle off **Offer to save passwords**.
4. View Saved passwords to remove existing passwords.

Mozilla Firefox

Options

To Access Your Browser Settings
1. Click the **Options** (Open menu) button in the right corner.
2. From the drop down menu select **Settings**.

To Clear Cache
1. In the left pane select **Privacy & Security**.
2. In the Cookies and Site Data section, click the **Clear Data** button.
3. Check both options and click **Clear**.

To Clear Saved Passwords
1. In the left pane select **Privacy & Security**.
2. In the Forms & Passwords section, uncheck Ask to save logins and passwords for websites.
3. Click the Saved Logins button to delete existing saved data.

Internet Explorer
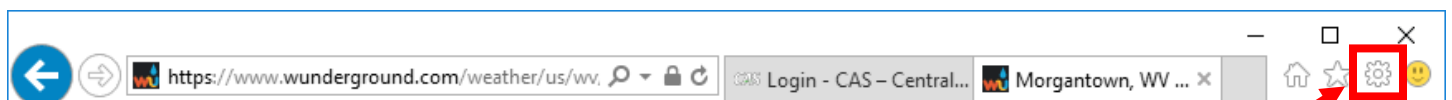
Options

To Access Your Browser Settings
1. Click the **Options** button in the right corner.
2. From the menu select **Internet Options**.
3. Along the top select the **Security** tab or the **Privacy** tab.

To Clear Your Cache and Delete Saved Passwords
1. Click the **Options** button in the right corner.
2. From the menu select **Internet Options**.
3. In the Browsing history section, click **Delete**.
4. Select the options to remove and click the **Delete** button.

Opera
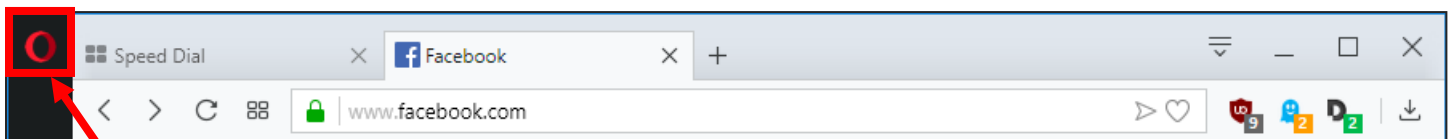
Options

To Access Your Browser Settings
1. In the top left corner, click the red **O**.
2. From the drop down menu select **Settings**.
3. Click **Advanced** to see additional options.

To Clear Cache
1. Select **Privacy and security**, then select **Clear browsing data**.
2. Select the desired options, then click the **Clear browsing data** button.

File Explorer

File Explorer (also called Windows Explorer) is the window that opens to show you places and folders on your computer.
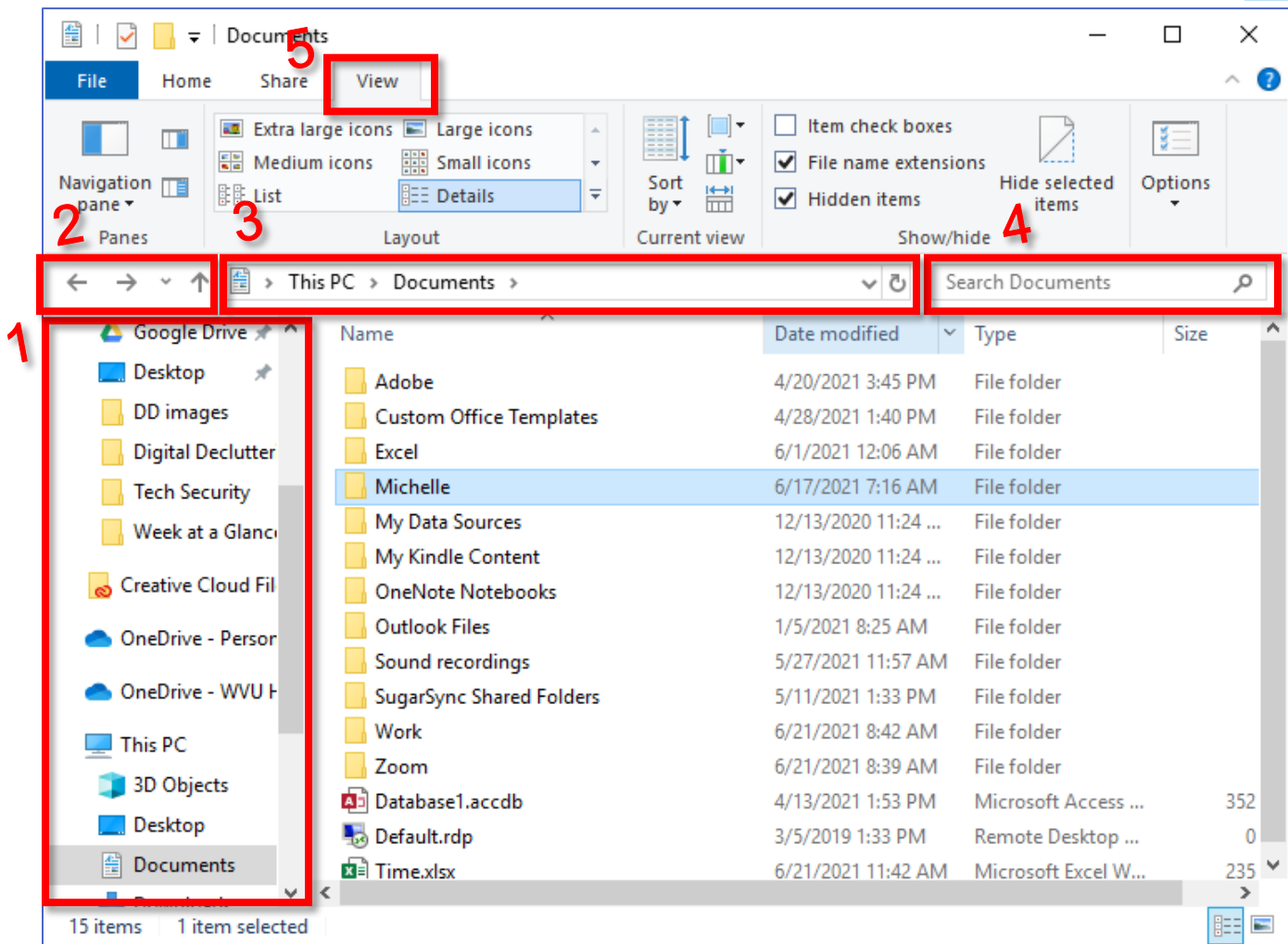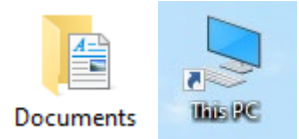
1. **Navigation Pane** – Allows you to view the folder structure of your computer, and quickly access files and folders. You can "pin" frequently used folders to the **Quick Access** area of the navigation pane.

2. **Navigation Buttons** – These are the same as your **Back** and **Forward** buttons on your web browser. Additionally, if you have a "back" button on your mouse that you use for web browsing, this button also works in File Explorer.

3. **Address / Location Bar** – This answers the question, "where am I?" If you've clicked around so much you no longer have any idea where you are, this bar will tell you.

4. **Search Box** – Type into this book to search for a file by name, type, date created, etc. Search is akin to yelling to someone in your house, "Have you see / do you remember where X is?" Except a lot faster, and quieter as well.

5. **Ribbon / View Tab of the Ribbon** – This is where you find your "menu" options. The View tab of the File Explorer window allows you to change how files are displayed, as well as to change sorting, grouping, and display columns.

Disk Clean Up

The older your computer, the more junk files you accumulate. Sometimes this doesn't matter, but with an older computer—especially one with a smaller hard drive—it can sometimes slow down the device. Once or twice a year you might want to run Disk Clean up, which is a built in program that looks for orphan and useless files and gets rid of them.

Additionally, this is where you can check and see if your hard drive is filling up. A full hard drive can also sometimes cause problems and slow down your computer. If your hard drive does not have a lot of empty space, you might want to consider looking for files and pictures to delete.

Disk Cleanup

1. Open Windows Explorer, In the Navigation Pane, select **This PC**.
2. In the main window, you should see (under Devices and Drives) Windows (C:) which is your hard drive.
3. Right click on **Windows C** and from the pop up menu select **Properties**.
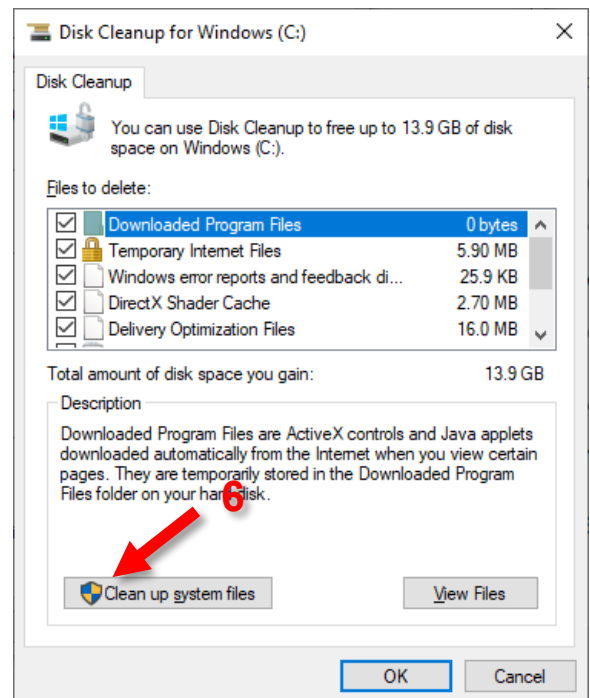
   OR

   Select **Windows C** in the main window (**2**). Select the **Drive Tools** tab of the ribbon. Select **Cleanup**.
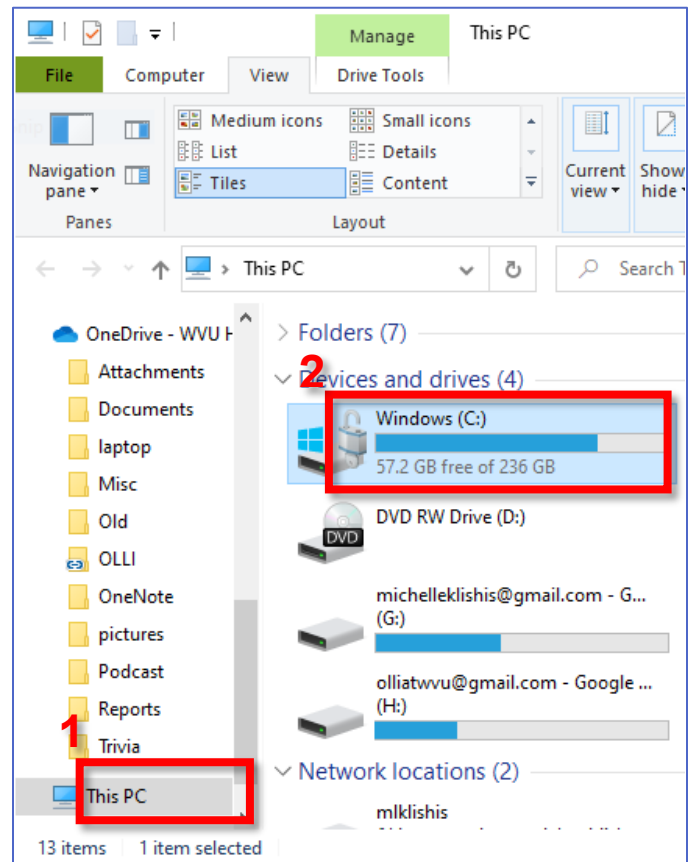
4. The Windows Properties Dialog box opens. Under the **General** tab, click the **Disk Cleanup** button.
5. **Wait patiently**. (This can take a bit. Feel free to find a magazine to read.)
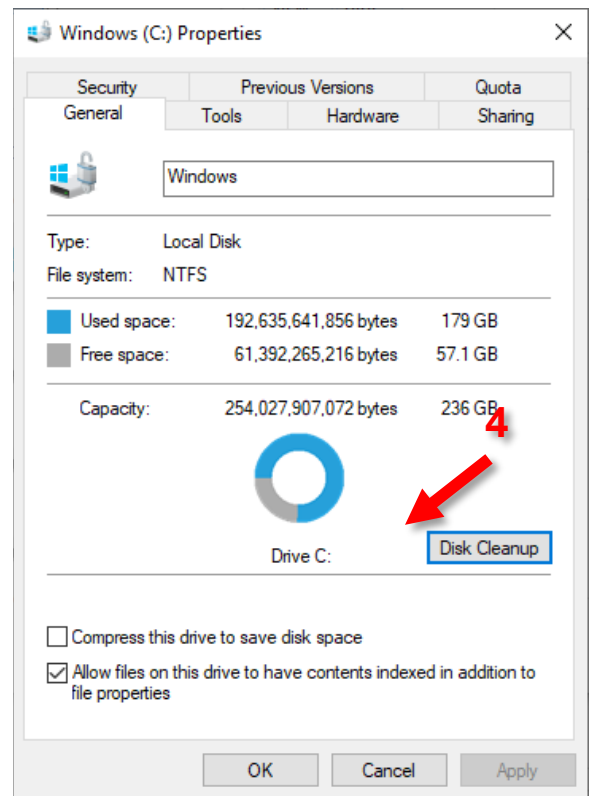
6. Click the **Clean up system files** button.
7. **Wait patiently**. (Maybe pick one of the longer articles to peruse.)

8. When the dialog box opens again, you have a NEW TAB: **More options**. Open that tab.
9. In the lower part of the dialog box, under System Restore and Shadow Copies, click **Clean Up**,
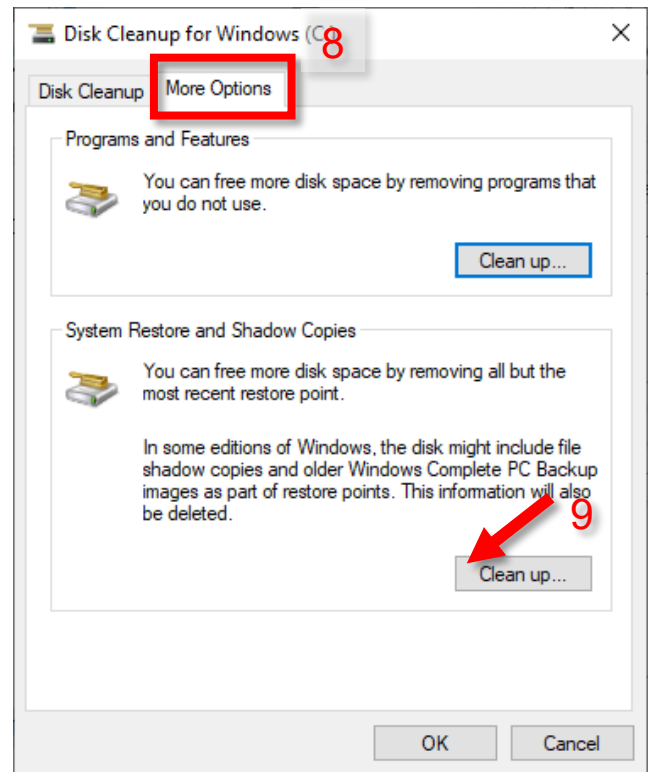
10. Ignore the scare language and click **Delete**.
11. Click the D**isk Cleanup** tab, to go back to basic options.
12. Check all the boxes.
13. Click OK.
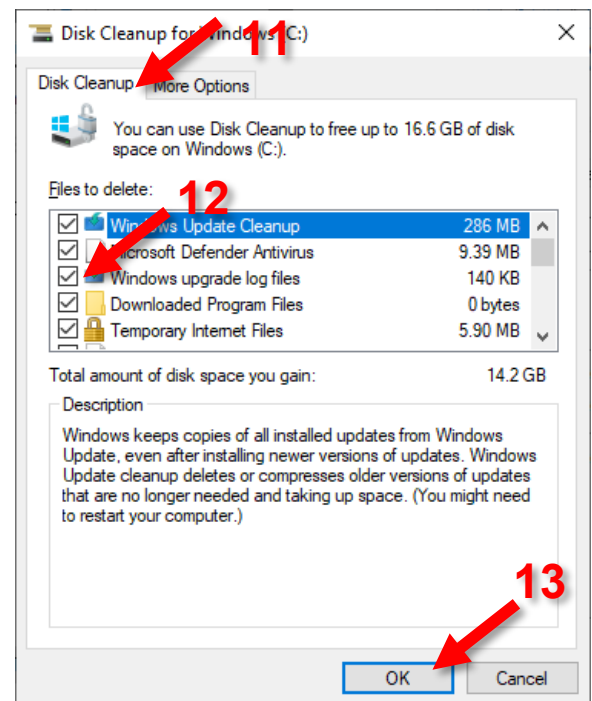
14. In the window that opens, click **Delete Files**.

15. **Wait patiently**. (This might be a good time to make yourself a cup of tea and grab a book to read.)
16. Reboot your computer.
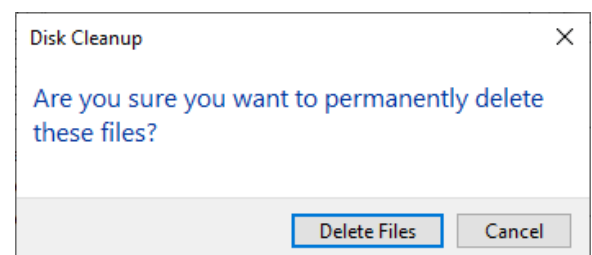
Start Up Items

There are a LOT of programs that start up automatically and run in the background. Sometimes removing these from auto startup can speed things up a little.

1. Press the key combination **Ctrl + Alt + Del**.
2. The screen changes to give you a list of commands, select **Task Manager**.
3. A small window opens to display a list of currently running programs. In the lower left corner click **More details**.
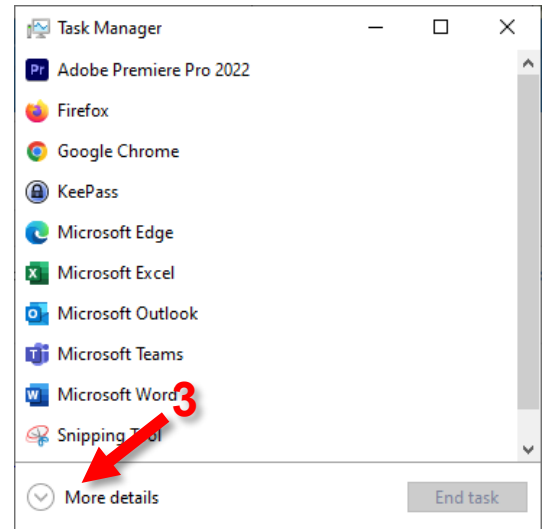
4. The window expands and you now have multiple tabs. Select the tab for **Startup**.
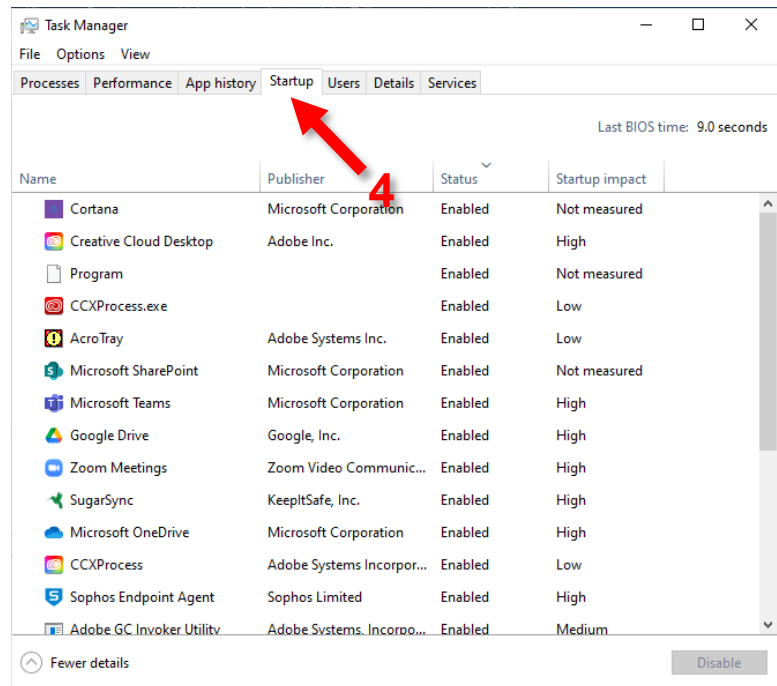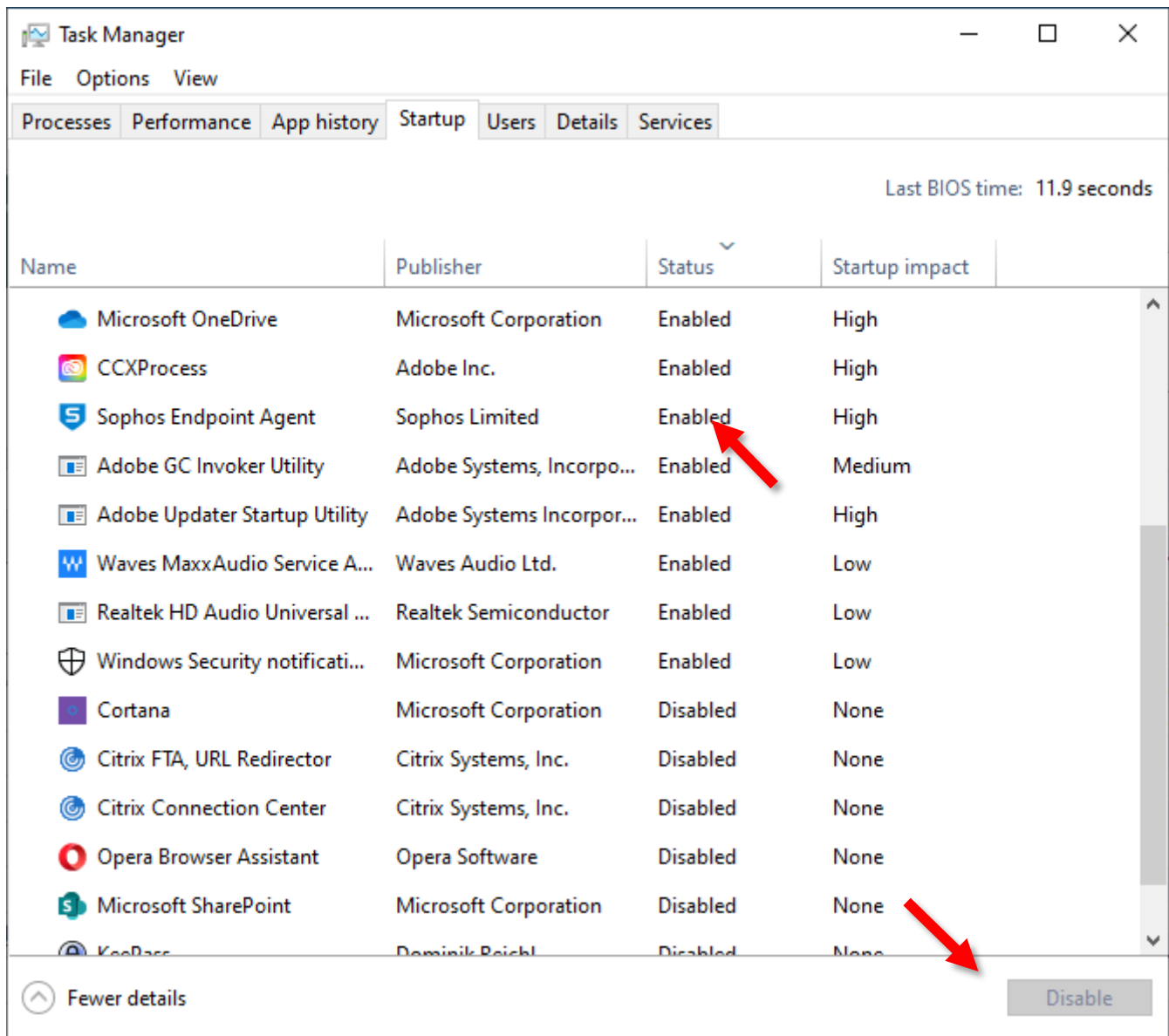
5. You can go through the list of programs that start without you doing anything, and disable ones you don't need to start on their own, such as web browsers. If you aren't sure what a program is, go to google and type in "what is" and the name of the program.
6. Right click on a program you do not want to auto start, and select **Disable** or select the program and click **Disable** in the lower right corner.
7. Unless you enjoy a life of danger, Do **NOT** do anything with any of the other tabs.
8. Close the window.