



You and Your Mouse *A Touching Experience*

Of the four items mentioned, the mouse is by far the most used for everything you do on the computer.

Can you even remember when you purchased your poor old mouse? If your mouse was alive, would you have cause to worry about going to jail for animal cruelty and neglect? It's time to give your mouse a long overdue checkup and bath supplied with the compliments of the digital veterinarian. Does your mouse -

1. Squeak when you move it around.
2. Stick or doesn't glide smoothly.
3. Make a jerking motion as you watch it move or jump across your display.
4. Cause your wrist or arm hurt after hours of use.

It's time to make using your computer a little easier and more efficient without spending a ton of money.

I'd suggest four things that have a dramatic impact each time you use a computer:

1. Speed of your computer processor.
2. Size of your monitor since it's the thing you look at and mumble to each day.
3. The keyboard with the letters starting to wear off the keys.
4. The poor old mouse that is getting really tired of the abuse and banging around it gets from your daily frustrations.

It's time to clean or replace your mouse if it has any one of these symptoms.

If your mouse is old, chances are good that the mouse's tail (cord) is getting worn out from all the repeated movements. You definitely need to clean it (not the tail) or replace it with a new mouse.

Time to Get Cheesy - Buy a New Mouse

I'm going to make this easy by not telling about all the different mouse options. I'm going to recommend what I use and like most since that's about all I'm qualified to comment about.

Laser Mouse. More expensive and worth every penny! There is no ball to get dirty or clean. It works on many surfaces including your leg. Sensitivity is great. Best thing I every did was to purchase a laser mouse.



Wireless. Cut the cord! You will be amazed how restrictive your corded mouse had been. No more picking up the mouse to move it back and forth because the cord restricts your movements. No cord to get tangled with anything else on your spotlessly clean, organized and spacious work area. Right! I have about a square foot in which to use my mouse!

Distance or Range. Check to see what range or how many feet the mouse will work away from your computer. Oops! For many of you it's only a couple of feet depending on the length of the cord. No, I haven't gotten rabies from my old mouse and I have not lost my marbles. You are wondering why this makes any difference. It's time to plan ahead as you plunge into the new world of digital television next February of 2009. Some day, when your ship comes in, you may buy a new plasma or big screen TV. You will then be able to plug your computer into the big

screen and use it as your monitor for slide shows and showing off your travel photos to the neighbors. Even more fun will be gathering the grandkids around your new giant TV to share slideshows of photos of their grandparents and family history.

So what's the deal with the mouse? If your wireless mouse has good range you will be able to stand or sit in front of the TV and run your computer remotely instead of being tethered to the computer off to the side of the big screen. A wireless mouse with good range will be very nice and it will really impress the "Know it Alls" in the your group of significant others. See my newsletter, *"The Big Screen Experience"* about attaching your computer to a big screen TV. This is currently listed in the Registered Users Tips and Suggestions page.

Mouse Magnifier. This is a must. Clicking a little button on a Microsoft mouse will allow you to magnify a little window on your display to see things bigger. Microsoft makes the best magnifier option for the mouse. See my newsletter, *"The Magnifier Mouse"* for details.

My Mouse Recommendation

You might as well go for broke. Get a wireless mouse and keyboard at the same time. You will also be amazed at how tired your keys are getting. When I purchased my new wireless mouse and keyboard I discovered my old keyboard had become like typing on a piece of cement. No joke! Springy new keys with letters you can actually read in the dark will make a big difference!



Microsoft® Wireless Laser Desktop 7000

I purchased a bluetooth combo keyboard and mouse. I plug ONE little device into my USB port that runs both the keyboard and mouse. So if you are starting to run out of USB ports, this will give one port back to you. Yes, now I can really impress the kids and neighbors because I can run both the mouse and type on the keyboard in front of the big screen TV. It's a real big WOW factor for this old grandpa.

I'm currently using the Microsoft® Wireless Laser Desktop 7000

I purchased it on-line from Amazon when they were running a special. I'd suggest you watch Amazon.com and a few other on-line resellers like Newegg.com for special deals which usually include free shipping and no tax! So why leave home when you can get the same deal in front of your computer while using your tired old mouse unless you want to feel and handle the mouse and type on the keyboard to make sure it's right for you.

You can buy these items separately which will cost you more in the long run. However, definitely get a new mouse!

I really like the mouse because it's also rechargeable. I detest buying batteries!

OK – you don't want to or can't afford the creme de la creme of mice and keyboards. Buy an inexpensive wireless Targus mouse. It's rechargeable, small and fits nicely in your hand. No magnifier but it's nice to use. Its one weakness is the little USB device you plug in will eventually break one of the wires off inside if you move the part that plugs into the your computer around a lot. Targus is good to replace it. I'm on my second Targus Mouse.

Mouse Do's and Don'ts

Do not eat in front of your mouse. These little critters like to collect food and carry it around on their pads.

Keep your mouse away from animals. Don't let your cat get near your mouse. Not a good idea for obvious feline entertainment reasons with

that tail and looks like a real mouse. However, cat hair will get into your mouse and cause problems with the movement of the ball.

Mouse Pad. Be kind to your mouse. Give it a little playground or pad to move around on. A change of the scenery on the pad graphics might give both of you a pleasant little lift. Using a pad reduces the amount of dirt the mouse picks up. A pad also makes it easier to move your mouse. Some surfaces do not work well with a mouse so keep a spare pad along if you use a notebook in different locations. A mouse pad with a padded wrist rest offers some needed support if you use your mouse for extended periods of time.

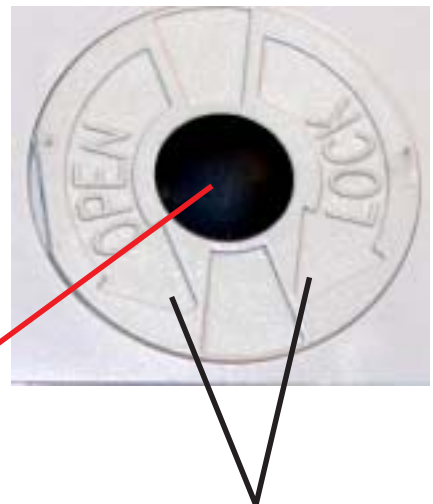
Cleaning Your Mouse

If you have an old mouse it has a ball and this is where the problems start. The ball will collect lint, hair and dirt each day. Eventually it will start to transfer this junk to the little rollers that touch the ball inside the mouse. This will cause the mouse to move erratically or jerk around on your display.

The little exterior plastic pads on the bottom of any mouse will also get dirty from movement on unclean surfaces. Using a mouse pad will greatly reduce the amount of dirt that transfers to the mouse pads.

The first step is to remove the collar that holds the ball in place.

Rotate the little collar or cover that goes over the ball.



Look closely since many have arrows indicating the direction the collar needs to be rotated to open.

These items need periodic cleaning

1. **Mouse sliders or plastic pads.** Use some cotton swabs dipped in isopropyl alcohol to clean each of the four pads. Do not use wood alcohol or strong chemicals that could melt the plastic.



2. **Clean the mouse ball.** It may be a little difficult to get out of the mouse. *Give up and buy a new mouse at this point.* Just kidding but think about buying a new mouse. Most **mouses** (intestinal spelling error). *Sorry, I couldn't resist leaving in the spellchecker's suggestion for "intentional" spelling error for a laugh for all you perfect spellers out there.*



Take care not to use a knife or something that will scratch the rubber ball *or you will have bumpy mouse.* OK use a knife and then you can be justified in *buying a new mouse.* Use a soft cloth – not one that will leave lint or fibers. Moisten the cloth with alcohol and rub on the ball until all the dirt and junk are removed.

4. **Clean the little rollers** in the mouse after removing the ball. This is more difficult so *buy the new mouse now.* You will note that each of the plastic rollers have a ring of dirt, hair and gunk coating them.



This coating must be removed from each of the three rollers or the mouse will continue to jump around and not pick up the movement of the ball.

Tweezers and cotton swabs may help clean the rollers. You may need to scrape the rollers with something hard but be careful not to scratch them unless you want to *give up and buy the new mouse now.*

5. Place the ball back in the old and tired mouse and screw the cap back on to hold the ball in place. Test the mouse. It should work much better. You will probably wonder why you didn't clean it earlier *or get a new mouse.*
6. Caution. Be careful not to sprain your wrist the next time you use the mouse since it will move more like an ice skate than a pushing your mouse across the sidewalk.

Cleaning an Optical Mouse

An optical or laser mouse has no ball (thankfully). It uses an infrared sensor to track movements of the mouse. It can be used directly on a desktop and does not need a mouse pad. However, a pad is helpful on uneven surfaces and will keep the mouse pads (sliders) clean.



1. Use tweezers to clean out debris and junk in optical / light opening. Don't look at the laser light. It's like shooting out your eye with your new BB gun. A small amount of dirt or lint may occlude or cause problems with the mouse's sensor.

2. Clean the mouse slider pads.

One last note about encouraging you to *buy a new laser mouse*. Cleaning is not usually required except to clean off the little plastic pads on the bottom of the mouse. Using a good mouse pad will eliminate most of the buildup that gets on the mouse pads.

How About a Little Support?

Wrist Support. This is critical if you use the mouse for many hours each day and may help avoid Carpal Tunnel disorder in your hand and wrist. I'm not offering medical advice but suggesting something that helps me. I've found two things that are helpful when using my mouse for long periods of time:

1. Support my wrist and hand.
2. Arm and elbow support.

I made a special desk insert for my mouse and keyboard. I soon found that supporting my whole arm made a huge difference when using my mouse for many hours at a time. I've also noticed that the ache in my wrist and shoulder went away. I recommend a wrist support for your keyboard for the same reason.

My desk insert makes a big different since most of us are using our computer on top of a desk or table that is too high for proper seating and use of the keyboard. My desk insert sits lower than my desk which helps with all the hours of typing and mouse work I do each day.

It's Time for a New Mouse – *so ask for one!*

Be brave or even a little surreptitious. Make audible mumblings about your bad mouse when others are within earshot. This will appear as some of your subconscious ramblings and rantings. Make sure your spouse or friends hear you complaining about your mouse. Say something like, "This mouse is driving me crazy!" Say it loud enough so they can hear you



from the other room. They will think one of two things and maybe both are happening to you. "She/he is losing it. Hey, I've got the greatest idea, I'll get her/him a new mouse for Christmas or the next birthday."

Be even more mischievous and bold if necessary. It's time to play real "cat and mouse."

Get a catalog or print out a page listing the mouse and keyboard you want. Leave it around for them to see. BE SMART! Put a big red circle around it so they won't get the wrong or cheapest thing.

If your significant others are a little dense you may have to show them what you are dreaming about or comment about what you are saving up for. Ask their opinion or recommendation. Sometimes being blunt and in their face is necessary. So go for it - a new mouse is not that expensive and you deserve it baby!



My Microsoft Wireless 7000 Laser mouse. It has a range of 30 feet so it is perfect to use with the big screen TV. This mouse is also rechargeable, has a magnifier and works with the wireless keyboard.



Targus wireless mouse and mouse pad

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