

Removing PC Clutter: Disk Defragmenter

Just like we need to periodically clear out our inboxes and file or purge the stacks of paper on our desks in order to feel organized and work more efficiently, we also need to take similar steps on our PCs for them to work more efficiently. The Windows utility, Disk Defragmenter, is one of those steps:

Disk Defragmenter? Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

If you've ever seen a desk or office that looks like the aftermath of a paper-bomb explosion, with paper covering a desk and floor that you KNOW are under there somewhere, you have an idea what our PC's hard drive can look like after months of work without a defrag. All the information is still there, but finding it might take a while! Running Disk Defragmenter weekly will organize the data on your PC so that Windows can find what you need most quickly and so that your free space is maximized – the equivalent of putting all those scattered papers in neat stacks, or better yet, organized in labeled file folders in file drawers, so you have room to work on your next project at your desk and can quickly locate whatever paperwork you need. Too bad we don't have such a button on our desks, to automatically file our papers!!

Find Disk Defragmenter in Windows XP by searching for it in "Help" (Start menu >> Help and Support) or:

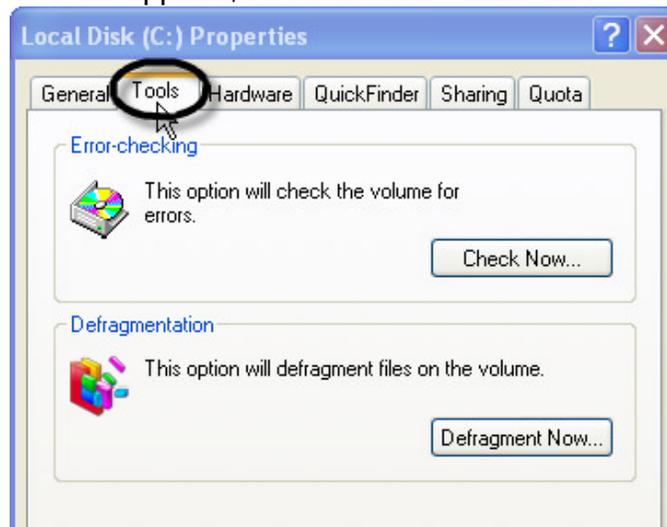
- Open "My Computer" from your Start Menu or from your desktop



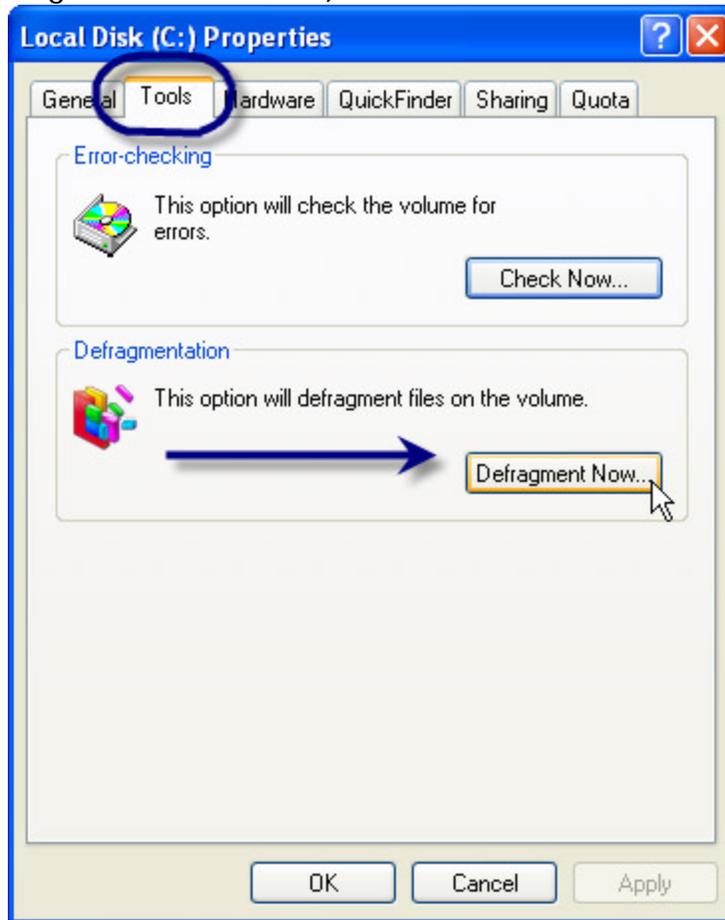
- Right-click on the drive to be maintained – start with your C: drive.



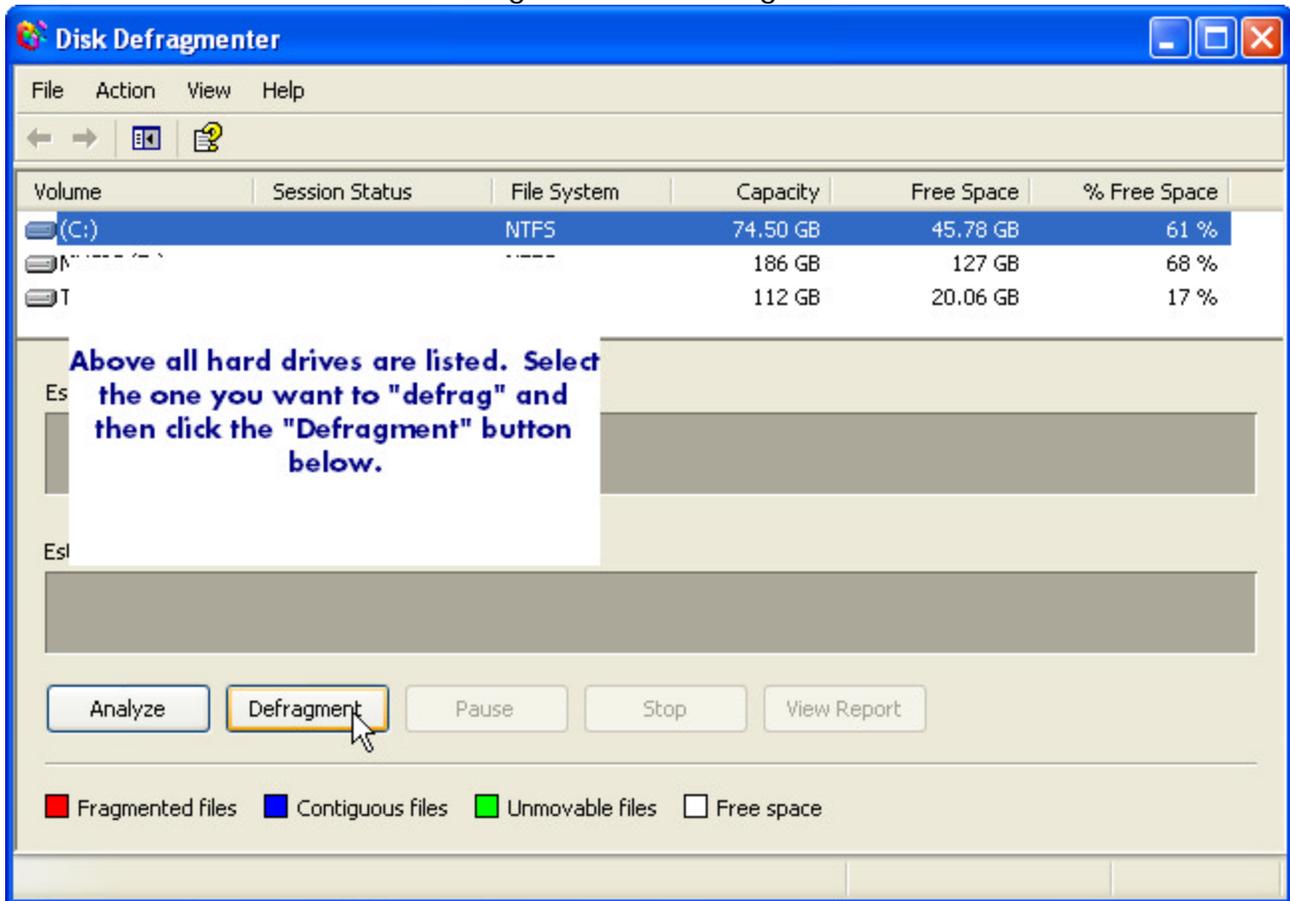
- In the menu that appears, left-click on "Properties"
- In the Properties window that appears, left-click on the "Tools" tab.



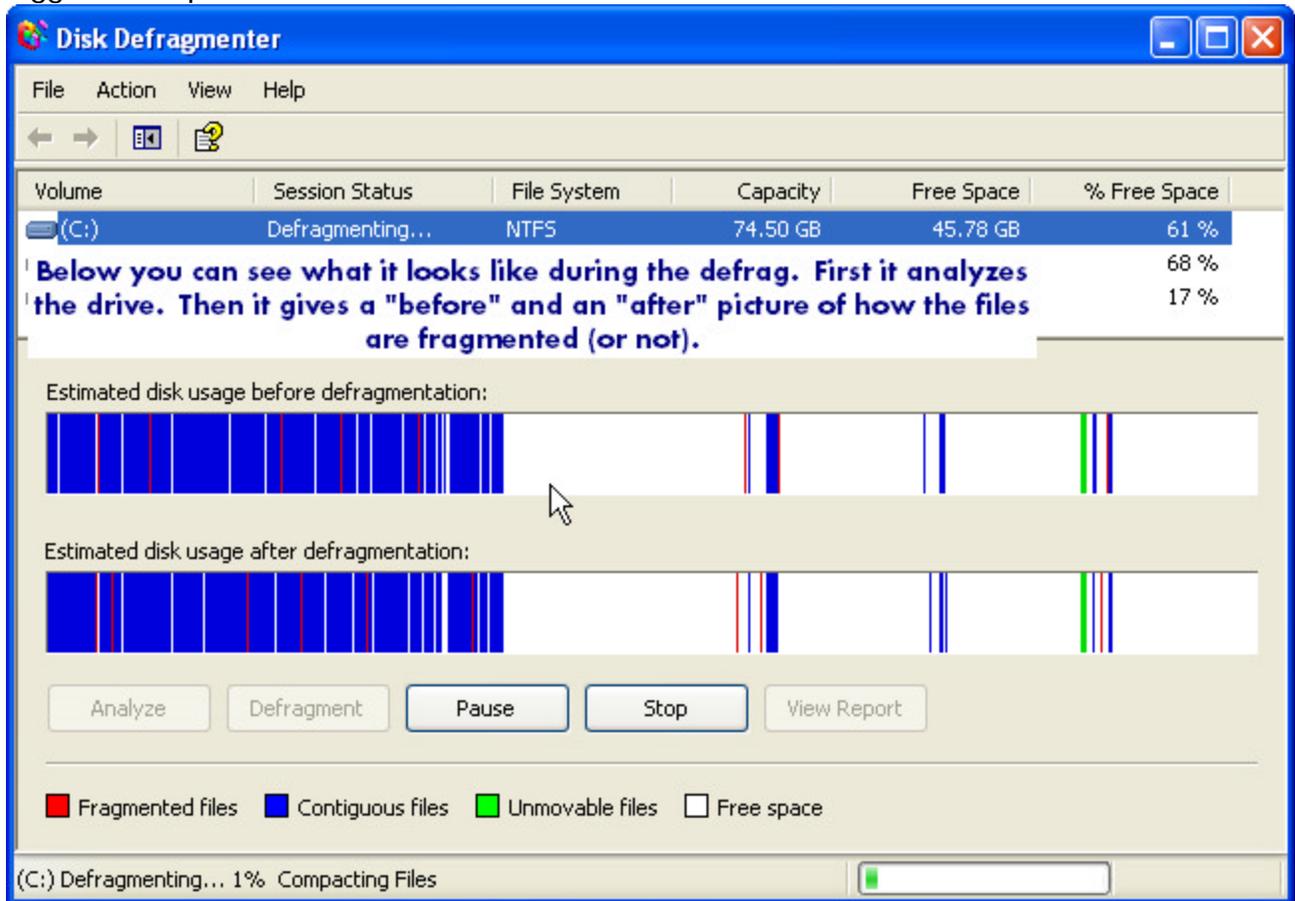
- Here you will find access to 2 key maintenance tools, Scandisk ("Check Now.." button) and Disk Defragmenter ("Defragment Now..." button).



- When you left-click the "Defragment Now..." button, you will see the following window appear. Select the drive and click the "Defragment" button to begin.



- Then you will see the “defrag” process begin. First it will analyze the drive and provide a “before” picture. Then as it reorganizes the way the files are stored to minimize file fragments and maximize free space, you will see the “after” picture change so there are fewer red lines and bigger white spaces.



- Allow 30-60 minutes for this to complete.
- Once it finishes, you should see a report of the fragmentation of the drive and the “Pause” and “Stop” buttons will no longer be available to you. You can then close this window.
- This process should help your PC seem to “run faster” for you as well. You can perform this as often as you’d like, preferably weekly or monthly, depending on your normal PC usage.