



# New Computer Checklist

This checklist is to help you make sure you don't forget a certain feature you might need in your new computer and avoid costly surprises. If you're not sure what this all means, just ask. We can provide a phone consultation to help navigate this list and your requirements or shop together online

## HARDWARE

- 1 Notebook or Desktop?** Notebooks(Laptops) are more prone to being dropped, lost, stolen and overheat. Desktops have more expandability and are solid work horse computers. Points through to #6 are focused on notebooks but can apply to desktops too.
- 2 Screen size:** Bigger is better. More space to work with. If you are looking at a notebook, a larger screen is easier to read, but it's also heavier to carry around.
- 3 Finger print reader? Web cam?** If you need it, make sure it comes with it. Finger print readers are good for security instead of remembering a complicated password. Web cams are good for video conference calls for business or just a personal video call to a friend.
- 4 Keyboard:** Standard keyboards here are U.S. English but you may find French/Bilingual which looks different. There is no Canadian. Number Pads on notebooks shift keyboard to left and so your keyboard will not be centered which annoys some people, but if you want the number pad, that's the way it is.
- 5 Mouse:** With notebooks, a touchpad can get in the way when typing and cause the mouse to jump. Maybe you prefer a laptop with a TrackPoint (Little dot in middle of keyboard)? Regardless, you can always connect a USB or Wireless/Bluetooth mouse.
- 6 DVD / BluRay:** CDs and DVD are not standard on laptops anymore. BluRay cost more and not standard on any notebook or desktop(tower). Unless you have the need to play BluRay movies or burn stuff to disk larger than 8.5GB, you don't need BluRay.
- 7 Custom Built Desktop versus Store bought brand name.** Store bought is typically cheaper but custom built gives you more options. With a custom build you can choose from what type of drive, how big, how many and how much memory, type of video card and more. Store bought, you buy it as is and pay extra later if necessary. Usually gamers go with custom builds.
- 8 Processor:** Gamers and programs requiring complex calculations, go for the Intel i7 or higher, otherwise, Intel i5 is all you need. AMD is harder to compare to. You wouldn't notice the speed difference with Intel i7 doing basic tasks unless it's for gaming or high end processing functions. There are many ways to measure CPUs now that it has become harder to compare. There are several generations available as well. Most current is most expensive.
- 9 Memory:** 8GB is the standard minimum but 16GB is recommended at minimum. Your computer will always take full advantage of any extra memory you have. The more RAM you have, the less time the CPU has to go back and forth between RAM and hard drive.
- 10 Hard drive:** 1TB is generally the smallest size HDD (Hard Disk Drive) you can buy, but there are smaller SSDs (Solid State Drives) at 128GB. How much space do you need? SSD drives claim of being 10x faster than an HDD (Hard Disk Drive). SSDs are fairly standard now. Our suggestion is minimum 500GB SSD. Unlike memory, bigger isn't always better, get what you need with some room to grow.

- 11 **Internal card reader:** For reading memory cards from Cameras, phones, etc. You could get USB
- 12 **Video card:** Built in is acceptable unless you're a gamer/graphics designer. If you're using the same monitor, check the cable type. We went from VGA to DVI to HDMI to Display Port now. You can get adapters if necessary rather than a whole new monitor.
- 13 **Wireless:** Do you need wireless or cabled network / Internet? Laptops all come with wireless now and some desktops do, but if it's a desktop, you can add a wireless card or USB
- 14 **USB Ports:** How many do you need? Count the devices you use now that are USB and add a bit more for growth. You can always add a USB hub later if you need more. USB 2.0 is standard and fine for keyboards, mice, and other USB 2.0 devices. USB 3.0 is faster for USB 3.0 devices such as external hard drives, thumb drives. USB4 2.0 is latest.
- 15 **New or used?** 2 months warranty with used but save a lot of money upfront, vs. 1 year warranty with brand new? Used also has older generation CPU and memory but still the same type and fast. Used can last just as long if not longer than brand new and they come with the latest Windows 11. However, when time for the next free upgrade to Windows 12, used might not be compatible?
- 16 **Weight of laptop:** If you travel a lot you might want a thin light weight laptop. Please note usually those thin ones don't have many ports to connect things. Look closely.

## SOFTWARE

- 1 List all the **software programs** you use and the version number you have. Are they compatible with the new operating system you will be getting on your new computer? You may need to upgrade some of your software. Also is your printer compatible? Install and run Belarc Advisor which is free and gives you a full inventory.  
<https://www.belarc.com/products/belarc-advisor>
- 2 Windows 10 expires October 14, 2025. Windows 11 support extends one year at a time but based on past experience, lasting approximately 10 years and the fact it was released Oct 4, 2021... Windows 11 should be good until approximately October 4, 2031.