

Scheduling Automated Defragmenting

Unfortunately, Windows XP doesn't provide any easy way to schedule automated defragmenting. This guide will walk you through configuring your system to automatically defragment at regular intervals (of your choice).

This method utilizes the Windows Scheduler Service which requires that your account is password-protected to run properly. You'll either need to have a password configured to log-in to your Windows account, or you'll need the Administrator password for your machine.

First, you'll need to create a batch script which, when executed, will defragment your hard drive(s).

1. Check the My Computer screen and take note of how many hard drives (or virtual drives, called partitions) your computer has listed, and their drive letters (such as drives C and D).
2. Open Notepad. Type the following:

defrag c: -f

where C: is the drive letter. If you have more than one drive, create an additional line for each additional hard drive, like this:

defrag c: -f

defrag d: -f

The "-f" option tells the script to go ahead and defrag the drive even if it's below the 15% fragmentation threshold or if there's low free space on the drive.

3. Save the file directly to the root directory of the main hard drive (such as C:\). Put the file name in quotation marks, and name it defrag-hd.bat like this:

"defrag-hd.bat"

Now that your batch script is created, you'll need to schedule it to run automatically.

1. From the Control Panel, open Scheduled Tasks. Click Add Scheduled Task and click Next.
2. Click the Browse button, browse to the C:\ drive (or wherever you saved the batch script) and double-click it.
3. Choose how often you'd like the machine to defrag. I personally chose Daily but this is more than is necessary for most users. Weekly is probably the best option. You could also have the machine defragment on boot-up. Click Next after you've chosen an option.
4. Set the exact schedule and time for the defragment to take place. Choose a time which your computer will probably be on; the defragment will only run if the machine is booted up. Click Next
5. Enter your password so that the machine can run the defrag script using your account at the specified time. Click Next, then Finish.