

1. Password & Identity Management

Your goal is to make your accounts as difficult to access as possible.

- **Use a Dedicated Password Manager:** Stop using your browser to save passwords. Use a dedicated service (like Bitwarden or 1Password) to generate and store unique, high-entropy passwords for every site.
- **Audit Your Logins:** Once a month, check for compromised passwords via your manager or sites like *Have I Been Pwned*.
- **Enable Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA):** Use an authenticator app (Google Authenticator, Authy) or hardware keys (YubiKey) rather than SMS codes, which can be intercepted via SIM swapping.
- **Clean Up "Ghost" Accounts:** Delete old accounts for services you no longer use. These are often the sources of forgotten data leaks.

1a. Emergency Preparedness

Be ready for when things go wrong.

- **The "Legacy Contact" Setup:** Most major platforms (Apple, Google, Facebook) now allow you to designate a "Legacy Contact." This ensures someone you trust can access your photos and data if something happens to you.
- **Update Your "Recovery" Info:** Check that the recovery phone number and email address on your primary accounts are still current. If you lose access to your 2FA device and your recovery email is an old work address, you could be locked out forever.

2. Device & Software Maintenance

Keep your hardware and software optimized to prevent vulnerabilities.

- **Automate Updates:** Set your OS (Windows, macOS, iOS, Android) and browsers to update automatically. These updates often include critical security patches for "zero-day" exploits.
- **The "App Purge":** If you haven't opened an app in three months, delete it. Apps often collect background data even when not in use.
- **Restart Weekly:** A simple reboot clears the system cache and can flush out certain types of non-persistent malware.

2a. Physical Hardware Longevity

Digital clutter slows down your software, but certain habits can kill your hardware.

- **The 20/80 Battery Rule:** To extend the lifespan of your smartphone or laptop battery by years, try to keep the charge between **20% and 80%**. Leaving a device plugged in at 100% all night stresses the lithium-ion cells.
- **Physical Port Cleaning:** Use a non-metallic pick (like a wooden toothpick) or compressed air to clean your charging ports every few months. Lint buildup is the #1 reason "broken" phones stop charging.
- **Thermal Vent Dusting:** If your laptop fans are loud, they are struggling. Use compressed air to blow out the vents. High heat doesn't just slow down your processor; it can permanently degrade internal components.

3. Data Organization & Backups

Digital clutter makes finding important information impossible during an emergency.

- **The 3-2-1 Backup Rule:**
 - 3 copies of your data.
 - 2 different media types (e.g., Cloud and External Hard Drive).
 - 1 copy stored off-site (in case of fire or theft).
- **Clear the "Downloads" Folder:** This is usually the messiest part of a drive. Sort or delete these files every week.
- **Empty the Trash:** Don't let your "Deleted Items" or "Bin" act as a secondary storage folder.

Suggested Maintenance Schedule

3a. The Photo Library Deep-Clean

Photos are often the primary reason people run out of cloud storage.

- **The "One-In, One-Out" Rule:** Whenever you take a burst of photos, immediately delete the 4 nearly identical shots and keep the best one.
- **The "Utility" Purge:** Search your library for "Screenshots" or "Documents." Delete parking spot reminders, QR codes, and temporary shopping lists that are more than a week old.
- **Leverage AI Tools:** Most modern photo apps (Apple Photos, Google Photos) have a "Duplicates" folder. Review and "Merge" these monthly to reclaim gigabytes of space instantly.
- **Monthly Offloading:** Once a month, move "Legacy" photos (vacations from 3 years ago) to a physical external drive or a cold-storage cloud service to keep

your phone's local storage lean.

3b. Achieving a Clear Inbox

Cleaning out your email is another regular practice to adopt.

- **The "Unsubscribe" Sprint:** Every morning, before you delete a marketing email, scroll to the bottom and hit **Unsubscribe**. Do this for 3 emails a day, and your "noise" will vanish within a month.
- **Search and Destroy by Sender:** Search your inbox for terms like "No-reply", "Newsletter", or "Order Confirmation". Sort by date and mass-delete everything older than 90 days.
- **Automated Triage (Filters):** Set up rules so that receipts, shipping updates, and newsletters skip the inbox entirely and go into a "To Read" or "Finance" folder.
- **The Archive vs. Delete Mindset:** If it's a tax document, archive it. If it's a notification that someone liked your post in 2019, delete it forever.

Pro-Tip: The "Wait and See" Folder

If you're nervous about deleting a mass of old emails or photos, move them to a folder named **"To Delete - [Current Date]"**. If you haven't looked for anything in that folder for 3 months, you can safely delete the entire folder with total peace of mind.

3c. Notification Hygiene

- **The Notification Audit:** Go to your settings and look at the list of apps allowed to send notifications. If an app doesn't provide **immediate, actionable value** (like a text or a calendar alert), turn its notifications off.
- **Grayscale Mode:** If you find yourself mindlessly scrolling, try setting your phone to "Grayscale" (usually in Accessibility settings). Removing the bright, dopamine-triggering colors makes the device significantly less addictive.
- **Home Screen Minimalism:** Keep only your 4-8 most "essential" apps on your first home screen. Move everything else into folders or the App Library. If you have to search for an app to open it, you're less likely to open it out of habit.

4. Privacy & Tracking Prevention

Reduce the amount of data you're leaking to advertisers and third parties.

- **Review App Permissions:** Check which apps have access to your camera, microphone, and location. Many "Flashlight" or "Calculator" apps have no business knowing where you live.

- **Browser Hardening:** Use privacy-focused extensions like uBlock Origin to block trackers and malicious scripts.
- **Clear Cookies and Cache:** Do this monthly to prevent "zombie" trackers from following your browsing habits indefinitely.

4a. The Manual Security Audit

These tasks protect your identity from some of the latest hacking techniques.

- **Session Logout:** Once a quarter, go into the "Security" settings of your major accounts (Google, Meta, Amazon) and click "**Log out of all other sessions.**" This kicks off any old devices or "ghost" logins you might have forgotten about.
- **Permission Review:** On mobile, check which apps have "Always On" location access. Change them to "Only while using the app." There is rarely a reason for a retail app to know where you are while you're sleeping.
- **Router Reboot:** Power-cycle your home router once a month. This clears the memory and can disrupt certain types of malware that sit in the router's temporary storage (RAM).

5. Network Security

- **Update Router Firmware:** Most people forget their router is a computer. Check for updates to ensure it isn't vulnerable to network-level attacks.
 - **Change Default Wi-Fi Credentials:** If your Wi-Fi name is "Linksys_123," change it. It signals to hackers that you haven't touched the default security settings.
 - **Use a VPN on Public Wi-Fi:** If you're working from a coffee shop, always use a reputable VPN to encrypt your traffic.
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Device Digital Hygiene Checklist

Frequency	Task
Weekly	Restart devices, clear Downloads folder, run a backup.
Monthly	Update all apps, review bank statements for odd subscriptions.
Quarterly	Change your router admin password, purge unused apps/accounts.
Annually	Audit your Password Manager, physical cleaning (dusting out fans).

Task	Benefit	Frequency
Clean Charging Port	Prevents "broken" connection issues.	Every 3 Months
Audit Location Permissions	Protects privacy and saves battery.	Every 6 Months

Log Out of All Sessions	Clears out "ghost" access from old devices.	Every 6 Months
Physical Dusting (Vents)	Prevents overheating and CPU throttling.	Annually

Storage Digital Hygiene Checklist

Frequency	Area	Action Item
Daily	Email	Perform 3 "Unsubscribe Sprints" and archive processed emails.
Weekly	Photos]	Clear out the "Screenshots" folder and delete blurry "burst" shots.
Monthly	Storage	Use the "Merge Duplicates" tool; empty the Email Trash/Spam folders.
Quarterly	Backups	Move older photo albums to external storage (the 3-2-1 rule).