

Cyber Challenge Checklist



Keep yourself and your devices safe!

- Install security updates
- Change your passwords
- Use a password manager
- Enable two-factor authentication
- Lock your device
- Back up your files
- Don't overshare on social media
- Create and save bookmarks to important sites
- Use a reliable email provider
- Delete unused apps
- Avoid public Wi-Fi spots or charging stations
- Watch where you click

Cyber Challenge Checklist

Whether it's Windows or Mac, Android or iPhone, ALL internet-connected technology is prone to vulnerabilities. Malicious cyber actors are constantly seeking ways to exploit any opportunity to get in your systems, such as through out-of-date software, unsecure apps that leave your data exposed, or easy-to-guess passwords.

However, you do not need to be a cybersecurity expert to help yourself and members of your community protect themselves.

Here are four simple steps everyone should take to enhance cybersecurity at home and in the workplace:

- **Think Before You Click:** Recognize and Report Phishing: If a link looks a little off, think before you click. It could be an attempt to get sensitive information or install malware.
- **Update Your Software:** Don't delay -- If you see a software update notification, act promptly. Better yet, turn on automatic updates.
- **Use Strong Passwords:** Use passwords that are long, unique, and randomly generated. Use password managers to generate and remember different, strong passwords for each of your accounts. A passwords manager will encrypt passwords securing them for you!
- **Enable Multi-Factor Authentication:** You need more than a password to protect your online accounts, and enabling MFA makes you significantly less likely to get hacked.



Want to learn more? Keep reading!



Install security updates

Every computer that's connected to the internet is frequently being attacked by hackers who test to see if the computer is prone to any known vulnerabilities. The only way to be safe is to always have the latest security updates installed. If you see a software update notification, act promptly. Better yet, learn how to turn on automatic updates.



Improve and regularly change your passwords

Nothing you do online is safe unless you use strong passwords that actually protect your information.

Most people use the same password everywhere, and their password is easy to guess. You'd be amazed how many people use the password "ABC123" or "12345". Using a password like this is basically asking to be hacked.

You may be advised to include special characters like exclamation marks or hyphens in passwords to make them stronger. This is helpful, but it's not enough.

Passwords like "Rover2015" and "R0v3r2015" are actually the same strength. This is because their length is the same.

For real protection, it's much more valuable to use LONGER passwords. Each additional character increases the amount of time for a hacker with a supercomputer to guess your password. A 16-character alphabetic password is much stronger than an 8-character password with special characters. Of course, even with a long password, you can always add in special characters to make it harder to guess.

In addition to creating strong passwords, you unfortunately must use a different password for each web site you use. If a hacker does get access to one of your passwords, you don't want them to get into ALL your accounts.

A few years back, hackers got access to EVERY password at a popular social networking site and they published all these logins online for anybody to see. If your login was published, anybody in the world can now access your account on any website where you use that same password.

If it seems like a huge burden to remember all your new, longer passwords, that's because it is. But there are tools you can add to your browser that can make this easier. Whether you use a browser add-on or not, it's absolutely critical to use longer passwords, and a different password on every web site.



Use a password manager

As you may have heard, for real protection, it's much more valuable to use LONGER passwords than short but complex passwords. In addition to creating strong passwords, you unfortunately must use a different password for each web site you use. If it seems like a huge burden to remember all your new, longer passwords, that's because it is. But, there are tools called password managers that can keep track of all these long, complex, and different passwords. Password managers are even more secure than using the password keepers built into your web browsers.



Enable two-factor authentication

This next one makes a big difference! Enable two-factor authentication wherever possible, especially for your most sensitive data -- like email, social media, or cloud storage accounts.

Two-factor authentication adds extra security to your password, so even if somebody knows your password, they need something else to log in as you. Often this is a security code that's sent to your phone, which means to login somebody needs your password AND your phone. Most email or social networking sites offer this security feature. When they do, you should use it.



Lock your device

If you lose your device, you don't want to add insult to injury by leaving yourself vulnerable to someone stealing your information. Provide an initial layer of security by locking your phone with a password or a PIN number – preferably one that's longer than four numbers.



Back up your files

In the event you do encounter malware or a virus, make sure you don't lose access to documents you need. Back up your important files, using a cloud service or a physical hard drive.



Don't overshare on social media

No, we're not talking about pictures of what you ate for lunch. Don't post confidential information like your home address, phone number, and credit card number. Collecting even a few tidbits of your personal information makes it easier for someone to pretend to be you and use your accounts without your permission and steal your data.



Create and save bookmarks

One way someone might try to steal your information is by getting you to enter your information on an illegitimate website that looks similar to your banking website, a government website, or any site where you use credit card or personal information. Avoid this by bookmarking the sites where you bank or input your financial information so you know you're sharing your information with the right people and companies.



Use a reliable email provider

Older email providers that haven't incorporated modern security protections may increase your likelihood of getting malware. Make sure your email provider has strong spam blocking and features like multi-factor authentication.



Delete unused apps

Not only will deleting unused apps free up more space on your device, but it can also protect your information. Apps on your phone or computer that are no longer supported by the developer open you up to security risks. Plus, most apps collect data about you – why give your data to an app you're not using?



Avoid public Wi-Fi hotspots or charging stations

It may be convenient to use the Wi-Fi at your local coffee shop or the charging station at the airport, but these areas are targets for someone looking to steal your information. If you absolutely must use public Wi-Fi, use a Virtual Private Network (VPN) and/or avoid transmitting information you would not want others to see.



Watch where you click

Don't click on ads that offer prizes, money, or something for free. Similarly, don't click on suspicious links – use your mouse to hover over a link to see where it's about to take you.

In your inbox, don't open email from people you don't know or download attachments from an email you didn't expect to get. Be suspicious of emails asking you to login somewhere – check for grammatical errors, a low-quality logo or a lack of a logo, a strange URL, or other indicators of a phishing attempt.

Tips for Students



Only download apps with an adult's permission

Check with your parent, guardian, or teacher before downloading an app to your device.



Don't give out personal information

Ask your parent, guardian, or teacher for help if an email or someone online asks you for your full name, address, birthday, or phone number.





Use strong passwords

Don't include your name, birthday, or other information that can be guessed in your password. Instead, make long passwords – they can include numbers, special characters, or even be phrases you'll remember. Use different passwords on all of your accounts – a parent, guardian, or teacher can help you set up a password manager to remember them all!



Watch where you click

Don't open emails from people you don't know. Don't click on ads that offer prizes, money, or something for free.





Check your settings

Have a parent, guardian, or teacher help you make sure the privacy settings on an apps or social media platforms you use are set and appropriate for your age group.



Take care of your tech

Don't open emails from people you don't know. Don't click on ads that offer prizes, money, or something for free.

