

# Protect Your Computer from Cyber Attacks

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With the uptick in working remotely since 2020, cyber-attacks are happening more and more often. The FBI reported a 300% increase in reported cybercrimes since the COVID-19 pandemic began. According to a study by the University of Maryland, attacks affect one in three Americans every year.

I know this all sounds a bit grim, but it is good to be aware of this. The good news is there are easy practices you can apply to avoid being hacked. Here are a few:

1. *Update your systems regularly* – When you're using your computer or favorite app, have you avoided clicking that "update" message that comes up on your screen? Stop doing that. Take the extra few minutes for the update. Software companies are prompting you to install the latest patches, many of which prevent cyber attacks by closing exploitable portions of software.
2. *Create strong passwords* – Never use anything that is obvious, like sequential numbers/letters (i.e., abcd123) or personal information such as your name or date of birth. The days of using "password1234" are long gone!
3. *Regularly change passwords* – Change your passwords a few times a year. Come up with shiny, brand-new ones – don't just move around numbers or letters in the ones you're already using.
4. *Store your passwords in a secure location* – If your password is really, really good, you're probably going to forget it, unless you store it somewhere. And I don't mean on a piece of paper or in a Microsoft Word document. (Please don't do that last one!) And nothing is more annoying than having to constantly create a new password because you forgot your old one. A simple solution to this is using an app that's made for storing and securing passwords, such as [LastPass](#) or [Dashlane](#).

By using just these few preventative measures, you will drastically reduce your chances of being hacked. And it doesn't take much time to do.

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