Maximize Your Display's Performance:
Ten Tips for Monitor Optimization

1) Set your screen saver to launch automatically when the computer has been idle for 15-30 minutes. A static display can cause pixels to burn out faster, especially in CRT monitors. Choosing a screensaver with lots of movement and multiple colors helps prevent pixel burnout by continuously alternating the active pixels. LCD monitors are less likely than CRTs to suffer from pixel burnout, but a static display can cause an afterimage on the screen. Though the display will heal over time, setting a screensaver can help prevent the problem all together.

   Some monitors may also have a 'sleep' mode, which helps save energy when you're not using your monitor. It's usually preferable to have a screen saver running when you're only away for a short time, because a display can take several minutes to warm up from sleep mode, but will recover immediately from a screensaver. Set the screensaver to activate after the monitor has been idle for 15-30 minutes, and set your monitor to go to sleep after an hour of inactivity. If you're going to be away for an extended period of time, it's best to turn the monitor off entirely (see tip 2), but keep in mind that a monitor takes even longer to warm up from being off than from sleep mode.

2) Always turn your monitor off at night, or whenever you won't be using it for several hours. Leaving a monitor on all the time causes the pixels to burn out faster and runs up electricity bills.

3) Select a patterned background or wallpaper for your screen, and change it periodically. A solid, single color background can accelerate pixel burnout.

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4) If you're using a CRT monitor, check the refresh rate. In CRT monitors, the image on the screen is continuously redrawn, and the refresh rate refers to how frequently this happens. Ideally, the refresh rate should be set at 75Hz or 85Hz. Lower refresh rates can cause flickering, and though it may not always be noticeable, it can still cause eye strain and headaches. This is not a problem with LCDs.

5) Make sure the monitor is set at the resolution recommended by the manufacturer. Using a resolution other than the recommended one can cause an image on an LCD to be distorted or out of focus. On a CRT display, using a higher-than-recommended resolution may require a lower refresh rate, and cause flickering.

6) Look for monitors with an auto-adjust function. In LCD monitors, this feature will adjust basic monitor settings such as clock, focus, horizontal position and vertical position for optimal viewing.

7) Keep your monitor clean. Monitors build up static electricity, which attracts dust. A layer of dust on the screen can distort the image. Also, dirt and dust can build up in the monitor cabinet, making it a hidden source of allergies. Be sure to dust CRT monitors every two weeks. LCDs generate less static, so dusting once a month is adequate.

8) Avoid placing your monitor in direct sunlight. Direct sunlight can make both LCD and CRT displays appear washed-out and difficult to view, and it produces a glare on CRT monitors that can obscure the screen. Also, exposure to direct sunlight can cause permanent discoloration of the monitor cabinet.

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9) Position your monitor so that your eyes line up with the top of the screen, and you're looking slightly downwards at the middle of the display. Ergonomically, this is the best viewing angle, and it will help to minimize neck and eye strain. Monitors with height adjustable function make it easier to set the screen at this ergonomic position.

10) Don't turn your monitor on and off too frequently, as it can put a strain on the circuitry. If you're only going to be away from your computer for a couple hours or less, it's better to leave it on with a screen saver running, or in sleep mode, than to power it down and power it back up again.

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