



Tips for Buying a First Computer

by: [Guy Ames](#)

The first question you need to ask yourself is why you need a computer and for what purpose you will use it:

- * Surfing the Internet
- * Sending and receiving e-mail
- * Word Processing
- * Spreadsheet and Money management
- * Listening and recording music
- * Storing and manipulating images
- * Playing games

When you are certain that you really need a computer then you need to consider what computer to purchase.

The most common type of computer is the PC. Fewer and fewer people these days use Macintoshes and while Apple still makes them they are used primarily for graphics work at the high end multimedia level.

For home or office use you may be far better purchasing a desktop PC with pre-installed software. And PC prices are on the way down.

Of course notebook computers are really great if you want to take advantage of the portability that they offer, although you really need to weigh this against the cost -- as laptops are still much more expensive than your average PC with the same functionality.

You need to determine what capabilities you want your computer to have – the size of the hard drive, the memory and the types of cards – video and audio – that it comes with.

For a standard home or basic office use you should be adequately served by 256Mb of RAM memory with a 80Gb hard drive for storage.

Two other things to consider are that you will need a monitor and software.

For a monitor, try for a 17 inch so that you don't have to squint to see what is on your screen. Flat panel displays are great for saving space too and the clarity of the displays now are quite impressive.

Most computers will come installed with software. Find what software the PC will come with and work out if this is all you need.

Basic word processing, spreadsheet and email/organizer software is adequate for most people and the ability to access the internet will require a modem installed as well.

If you are worried about learning to use your computer, don't be. There are tutorials within Windows XP to help get you started, and "wizards" are easy to use, step by step programs built into Windows that will help you learn a lot too.

Plus, once you get hooked up and online with your own computer, you will have access to millions of sites ready and willing to help you learn all about your new desktop PC, the software you have, and even learn how to do things you never imagined!



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About the author:

[Computer buying tips and tutorials on building your own desktop PC](#) start with the basics from Guy Ames.

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