



## How to Purchase a New Laptop Computer

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You have decided to make a major purchase! A new computer. Congratulations! Now what? Do you know what to get? Where to get it? What to buy? Are you going to leave this decision to the Salesperson in the store? Let's get educated!

1. **What is your budget?** – This is the first step. How much money do you have to spend?
2. **Determine your needs** – What are you going to be using the computer for? I know you will be using it for internet and word processing, but once you get it home, you are going to want to do a lot more.
3. **Memory** – how much memory should you get? Right now, most computers come with Windows Vista, which requires a bit more than past operating systems. As of today, I would say the absolute minimum you should get is 2gb of RAM. Nothing less. More is great!
4. **Storage** – We don't have to worry about storage like we did a few years ago. Most computers come with a good size hard drive. Also, external hard drives are very popular. They are small, cheap and convenient for backing up, running applications, etc.
5. **The convenience factor** – believe it or not, you pay for this. You pay for the small screen, 3.3lb system that forces you to carry a DVD drive in the bag! If you don't carry your laptop around, you may want to go with the 15.4 inch screen and get a bag with wheels if it is too heavy.
6. **Software needs** – don't forget to add the extra cost if you need to purchase Adobe Photoshop, Microsoft Word, Quicken, etc. Your computer does not come with Microsoft Word, and Quicken may only be a 30 day trial.
7. **Warranty** – depending on how long you plan on keeping your computer (keeping it long is not necessarily a good thing). You will want to have at least a 1 year warranty. Find

out what you do if the screen goes bad. Sometimes it is misleading and the display is not covered under the basic warranty. Without the screen, you are in trouble!

So now that you are educated, get to the store! Happy purchasing.

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Sheryl Cherico is President/COO of mPACTS and Senior Consultant for Efficiency in Practice. Headquartered in Atlanta , Georgia , **mPacts** provides information technology services and consulting for health practices throughout the Southeast. Efficiency in Practice is a free eNewsletter for medical practice managers who want to save time, money and reduce risk. For more information and to access your FREE report, *The 8 Things You MUST Know About CMS' RAC Program*, visit [www.inefficiencyinpractice.com](http://www.inefficiencyinpractice.com) or check out our blog at [www.inefficiencyinpractice.blogspot.com](http://www.inefficiencyinpractice.blogspot.com).

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