

Frequently Asked Questions

Will Sleeper work with my... (fax modem, bbs software, backup utility)?

Sleeper should work with any software. It has no knowledge of what program is requesting data from the disk - it merely spins it down when it hasn't been used for a while, and spins it up when there is a request to read or write data.

For fax modems, remember that it will take the disk a few seconds to spin up before the fax can be received. It's best to set your fax software to answer on the first ring to ensure that it can access the disk before the phone stops ringing.

Why are some options disabled?

Some of Sleeper's functions may be grayed out if your machine does not have the hardware to support them. The screen saver will be disabled on Macs that are not capable of displaying color. The Energy Star features will be disabled on machines that do not have the necessary video hardware to turn off an Energy Star compliant monitor.

Will Sleeper work with my current screen saver?

Sleeper will work with screen savers that support the 'SAVC' and 'SAVR' Gestalt selectors, such as After Dark. This means that the hotkey will put the disk to sleep and trigger an alternate screen saver if Sleeper's screen saver is turned off. If the "Spin down only when screen is dimmed" checkbox is used and Sleeper's screen saver is disabled, Sleeper will check for another screen saver instead.

We recommend using After Dark 3.0 with Sleeper if you plan to use the two in conjunction. While 2.0 reportedly works in most cases, Sleeper's Energy Saver feature may not refresh the screen correctly if an After Dark module is running. After Dark also takes over your Macintosh so completely that Sleeper may never get an opportunity to check if it's idle. For this reason, Energy Star power down may not work, though we have been able to work around After Dark to keep disk sleep working consistently.

My Syquest disk will not wake up. Is this a bug in Sleeper?

No. Syquest disks respond differently to the SCSI Stop/Start command that Sleeper uses to spin drives down and up. This appears to be due to the fact that these commands share the same SCSI operation codes as the SCSI Eject command, so it's ambiguous in the case of drives with ejectable media, such as Syquests.

We recommend that you keep the drive sleep checkboxes for Syquest drives turned off.

My hard disk never spins down or keeps waking up - why?

Something is accessing the disk. To more closely test the problem, use the hotkey to put the disk to sleep and then see how long it takes before it "spontaneously" awakens. Some possible culprits are listed below:

The Finder:

When "calculate folder sizes" is turned on in the Views control panel, the Finder will periodically check the sizes of files, reading the information from disk.

Even when "calculate folder sizes" is turned off, the Finder will check some information periodically. To make sure that this checking does not wake the disk, set the disk cache in the Memory control panel to be 192K or higher.

After Dark:

Loading a screen saver module from disk will wake a sleeping disk. One way to avoid this when using After Dark's "Randomizer" module is to set it to "1 module" to avoid switching modules after After Dark has been activated.

Some complex After Dark modules will also read information from disk periodically, and this may wake sleeping drives as well.

Norton Utilities FileSaver:

This utility may access the disk during idle time, depending upon the settings you have used with it.

Automatic compression or defragmenting utilities:

If you have one of these set to do its work during idle time, it will spin up the disk to do its work.

File Sharing:

If your Mac is on a network with file sharing enabled, someone at another Mac may use your hard disk. File sharing also periodically checks the disk to check for changes in permissions. You may have to increase the disk cache in the Memory control panel to 256K or more to prevent these checks from actually accessing the disk.

Hourly Chimes:

Playing sounds may cause the hard disk to spin back up, since the sound must often be loaded from your System disk to be played. Setting a clock program to chime regularly may therefore cause disk access. Note that you can avoid this with Apple's Date & Time control panel by turning on the "...unless a screen saver is running" checkbox in the clock options.

Why do all my drives stay awake when I'm only using one?

By default Sleeper keeps all disks awake if one is active. If you're working, you probably don't want to have a disk spin down. The Finder, standard file dialogs, and other parts of the Mac system access all the disks fairly frequently when your Mac is in use, so the disks will just keep spinning down and back up again, and you would have to stop and wait for them to do so.

You can change this behavior by turning off the "Spin down all disks together" checkbox. Depending upon the extensions and control panels you have installed and how you use your Mac, this may or may not be more convenient for you.

Does Sleeper watch for serial port and CPU activity?

Sleeper doesn't have to. Unlike After Dark, Sleeper doesn't occupy the CPU when your Mac is "sleeping," so there's no need for the sort of monitoring that After Dark uses.

The screen on my Quadra 660AV, 840AV or PowerPro 601 accelerated Mac doesn't dim. Why?

There appears to be a bug in the initialization of the on-board video on the AV Macs and on machines equipped with the Daystar PowerPro 601 accelerator. If you start up with a non-multisync monitor set to 16 or 24 bit mode (thousands or millions of colors), modifications to the monitor's gamma table don't do anything, so the screen won't dim. To work around this, command-option-click on the "Info" icon in the Sleeper control panel and turn on the AV workaround checkbox. At startup, this will toggle the screen depth to 256 colors and back to your original setting, causing the screen to flicker, but also causing the gamma table to be correctly initialized.

Is Sleeper "Accelerated for PowerPC"?

Yes. If the SCSI Manager on your system is running in native mode, Sleeper will install native code to do its work. Note, however, that in System 7.5.1 and prior (even on PowerMacs), the SCSI Manager runs in emulation. In this case, Sleeper installs 680x0 code, which runs faster than native code would because of the overhead of switching back and forth between native and emulated modes.

To tell what code is installed, command-click on the "Info" icon in Sleeper's control panel.

Does Sleeper work on portable Macintoshes?

Sleeper is not terribly useful on PowerBooks, since it provides the same functionality as the built-in Power Manager. It works, but is redundant so you probably will not find any value in it unless you have an external drive attached. Also, a PowerBook's screen should actually be turned off rather than dimmed, since any pattern in the LCD, white or black, can be "burned-in" according to Apple. Fortunately, burn-in on LCD displays is not permanent, and will fade away over time.

Sleeper has forgotten that I registered.

Occasionally Sleeper's Preferences file will become corrupted (usually due to a system crash). This can cause Sleeper to forget that you entered your registration code, causing it to bother you with reminders at startup every 3 days. To solve the problem, simply throw the Sleeper Prefs file in the trash (it's in the Preferences folder in your System folder). You will need to reenter your registration code and your settings in the Sleeper control panel afterwards. If you've lost your registration code, contact us and we'll send it to you again.