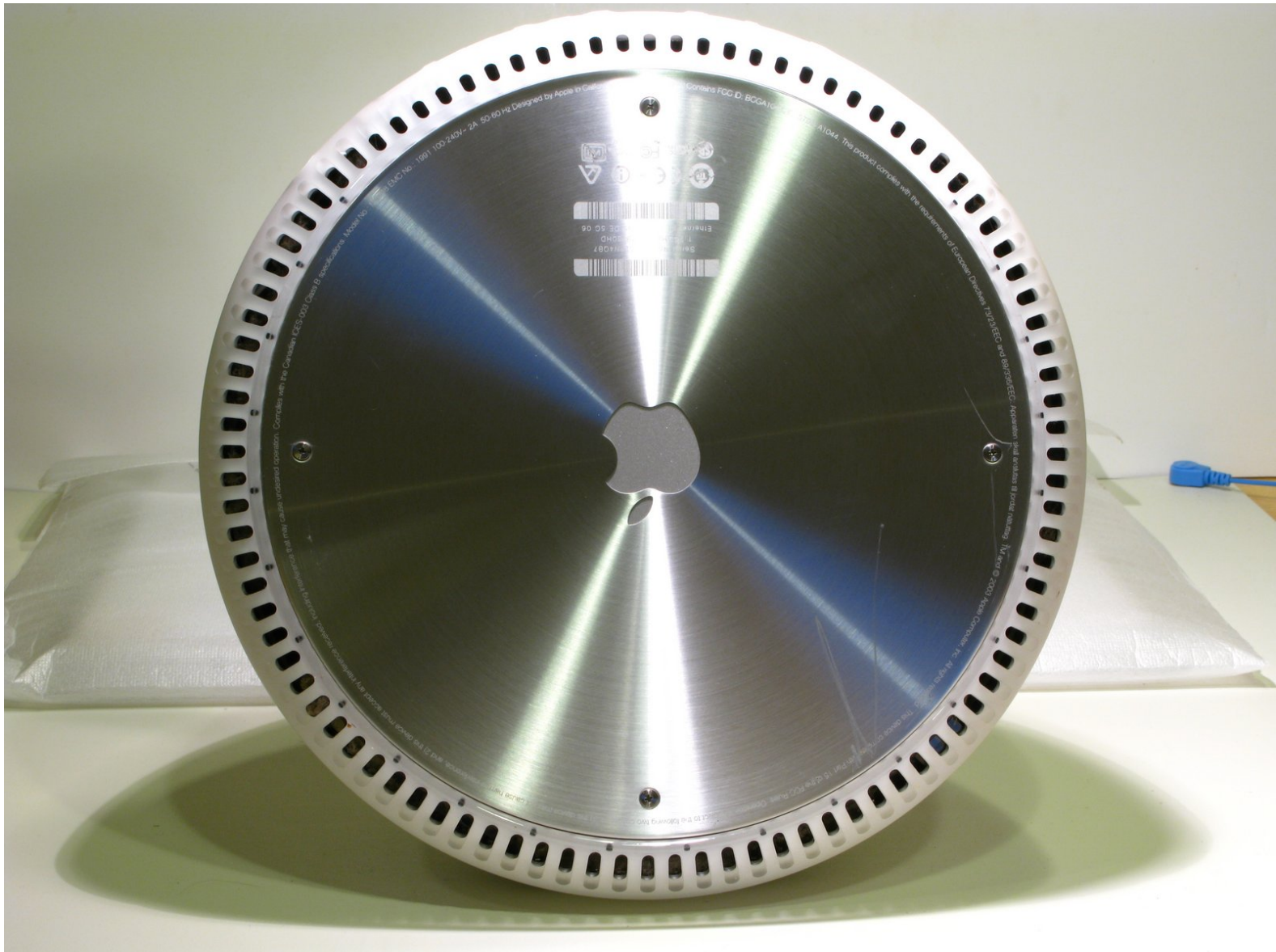# iMac G4 17'' Model M9168LLA Hard Drive Replacement

Use this guide to replace your failing hard drive or upgrade for more storage capacity.

Written By: randy3833

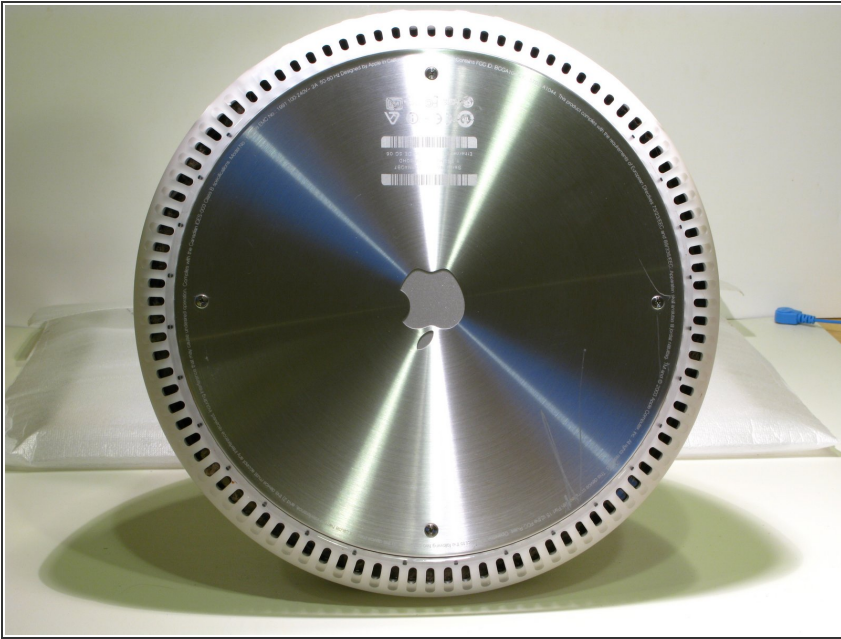This document was generated on 2022-02-01 05:13:56 AM (MST).

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TOOLS:

- Arctic Silver ArctiClean (1)
- Arctic Silver Thermal Paste (1)
- Phillips #0 Screwdriver (1)
- Phillips #1 Screwdriver (1)
- Spudger (1)
- TR10 Torx Security Screwdriver (1)
- T15 Torx Screwdriver (1)

PARTS:

- 3.5" ATA/IDE Hard Drive (1)
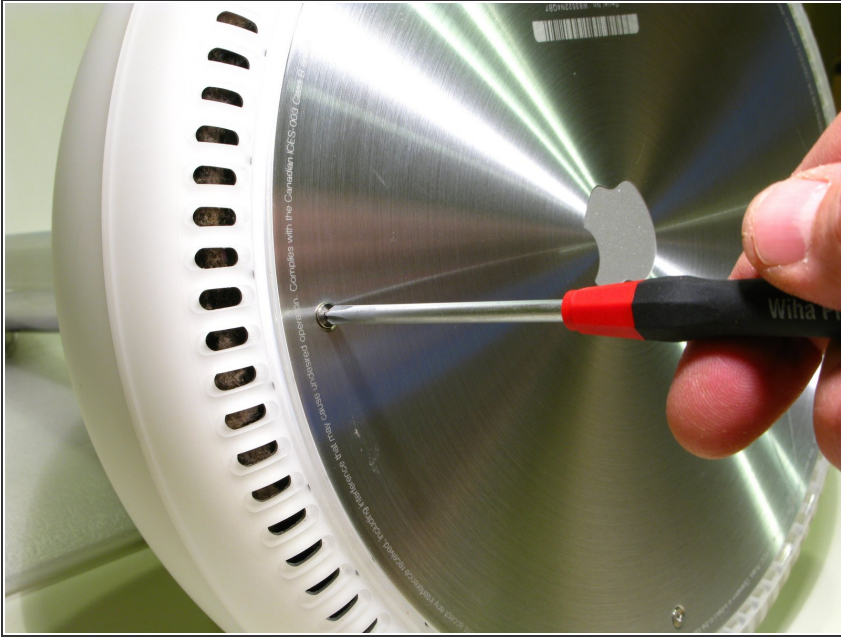
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Step 1 — Hard Drive

- Turn your iMac so that it faces away from you and lay it, Display Panel down onto a soft cloth or other soft surface.

- Your iMac should now look like the picture to the left, with the User Access plate facing you and the Apple logo upside down. This also places the door for the Optical Drive facing down.

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Step 2

- Loosen the (4) Phillips screws securing the User Access Plate to the iMac's Bottom Housing. the screws are captive and not removable.
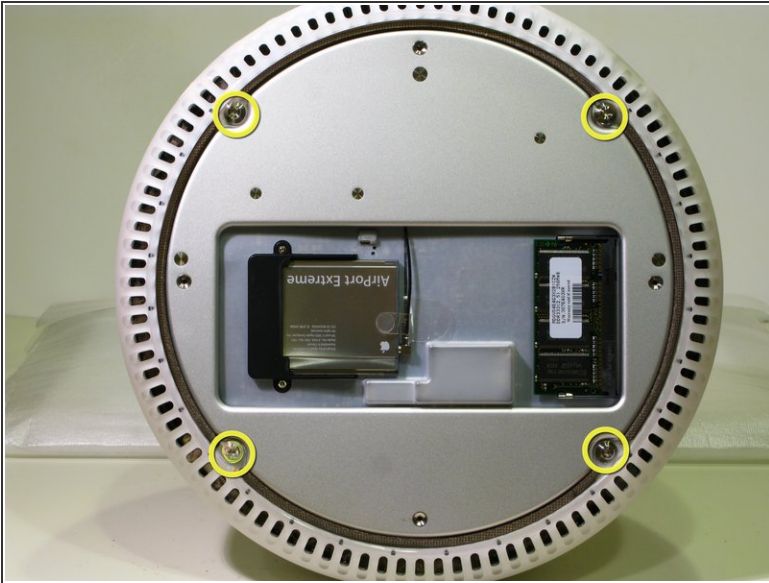
Step 3

- Remove the User Access Plate and set it aside. you now have access to the external memory module and Airport Extreme Card (if installed).

⚠ Make sure to ground yourself by touching the metallic portion of the bottom housing before touching the memory module or venturing any further into your iMac.

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Step 4

- Remove the 4 Torx screws securing the Bottom Housing with a T15 Torxdriver.

⚠ CAUTION! On reassembly of the Bottom Housing, these Torx screws must be fastened securely. Tighten them FIRMLY but do not force them. This will ensure that the heat pipe for the CPU is in direct contact with the Upper Housing heat sink. On reassembly you will make an application of Thermal Paste to the heat pipe mating surfaces. This will become evident as you proceed through the next steps.
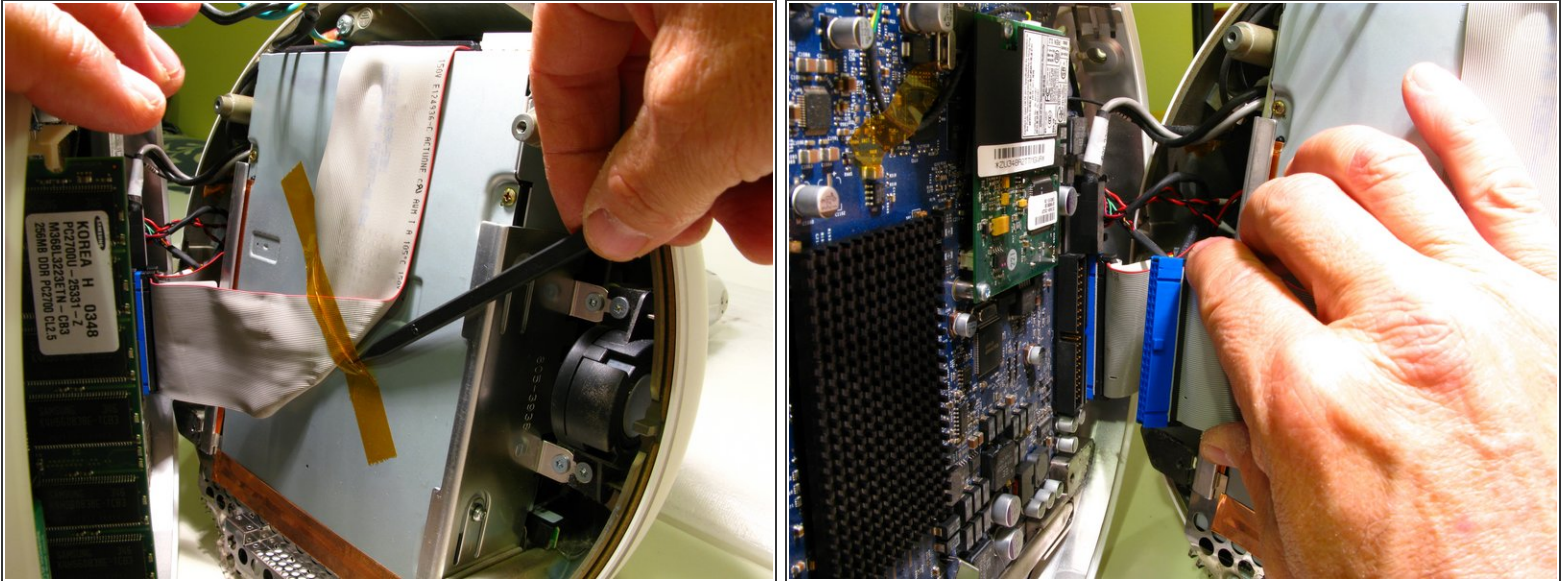
Step 5

- Grasp the Bottom Housing by the left and right edges and slowly wiggle it out. There will be some resistance, but it will come. Only pull it out enough, at first, to get a peek inside at the connectors and wire routing. Do not put undue strain on the connectors or you may pull them off the logic board!
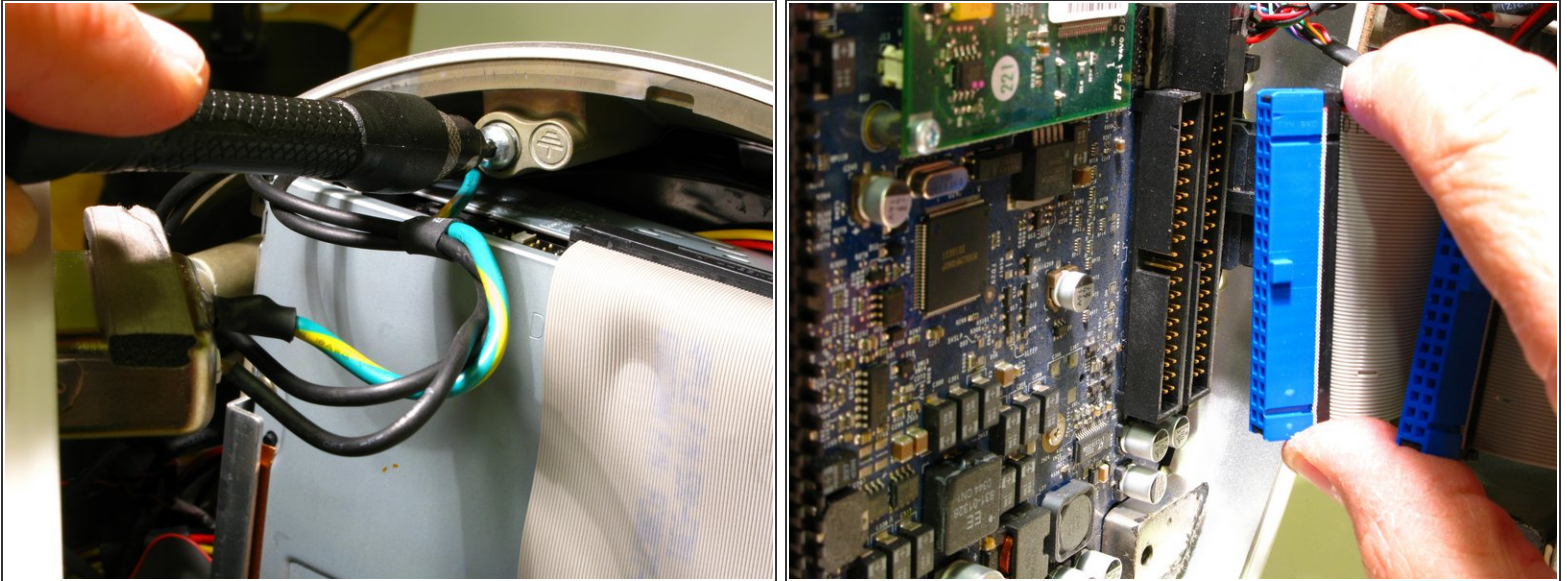
⚠ CAUTION! If you are following this guide to disassemble an earlier model iMac G4, you will encounter an entirely different situation when removing the Bottom Housing. On those models, there will be a fixed connector that will disconnect as you separate the Bottom Housing from the Upper Housing. That connector will be on your left or Airport Card side of the computer. Use extreme caution, making sure to apply your removal pressure evenly so that you don't twist the Bottom Housing open and bend the pins on the fixed connector.
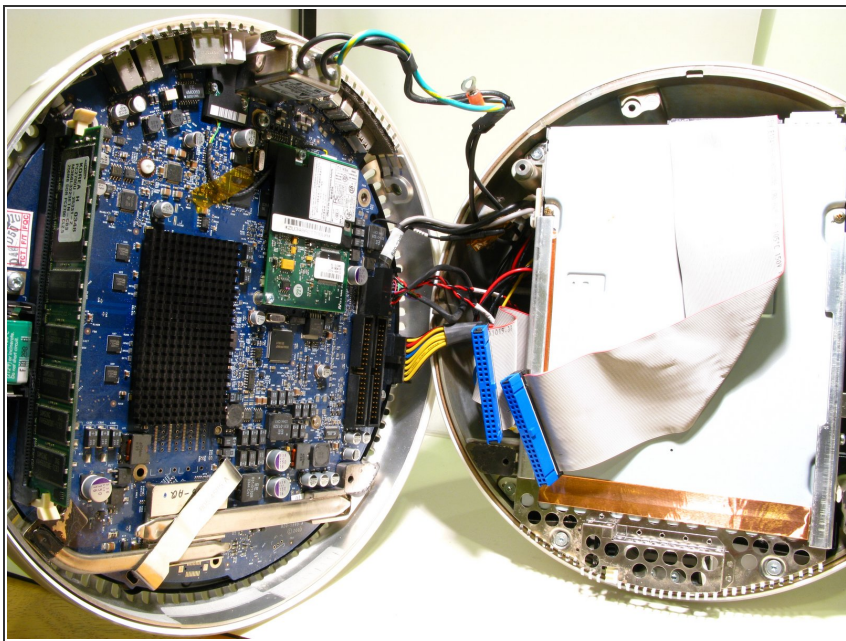
Step 6

- Open the right side of the Bottom Housing slowly. The idea is to be able to swing the Bottom Housing out of the way to the left, only enough to be able to remove the Drive Carrier that houses the Optical Drive and the Hard Drive.

- Begin by using a Spudger or your finger to peel back the tape that holds the Optical Drive data cable to the bottom of the Optical Drive.

- Gently swing the Bottom Housing out a bit farther and remove the Optical Drive data cable connector from the logic board by holding its outer edges and carefully wiggle it out evenly to avoid bending the pins. Do not pull directly on the ribbon cable, only on the blue plastic connector.
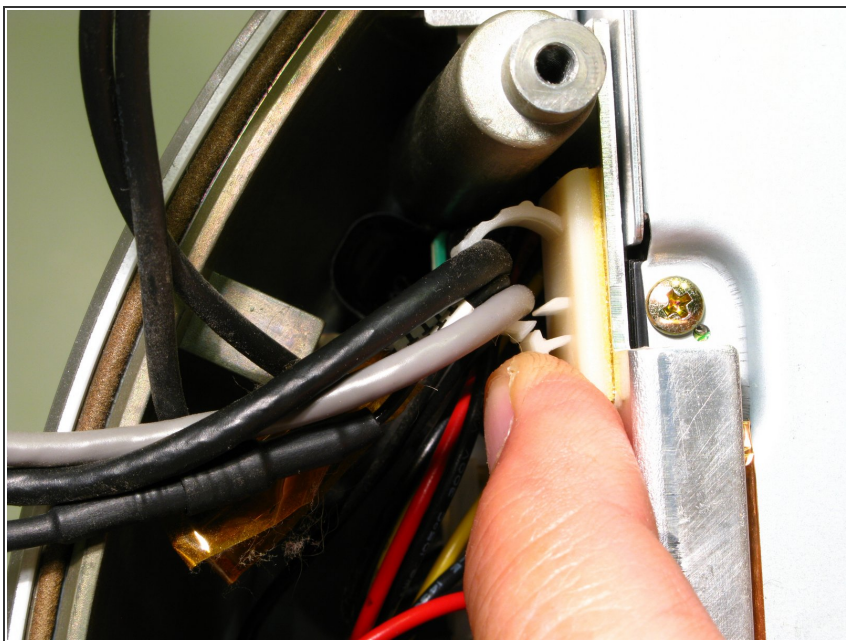
Step 7

- Remove the 22mm power cable ground screw with a T15 Torx screwdriver.

- You should now be able to swing the Bottom Housing out enough to disconnect the Hard Drive Data Cable. Again, only pull on the blue plastic connector, not the ribbon cable.

- There is no need to remove the remaining connectors from the logic board.

- Prop the Bottom Housing up so that it does not put strain on the remaining cables and connectors. Let it rest vertically, perpendicular to the Upper Housing.

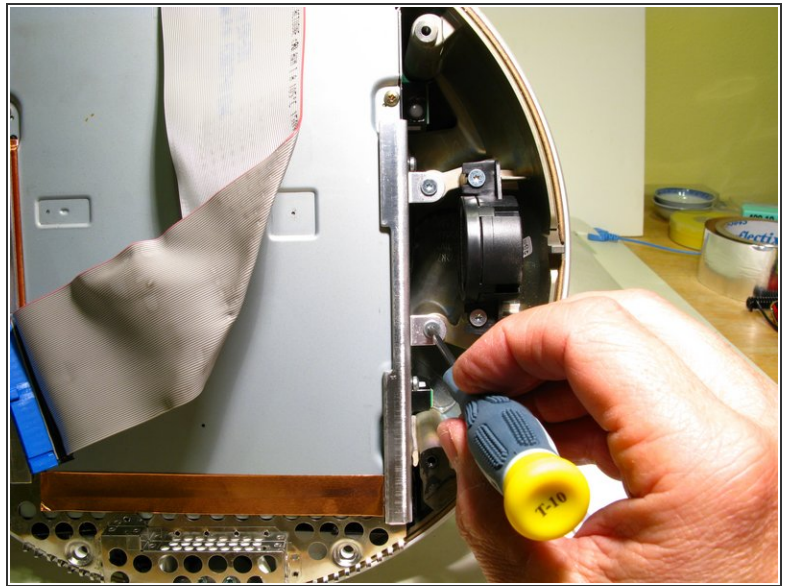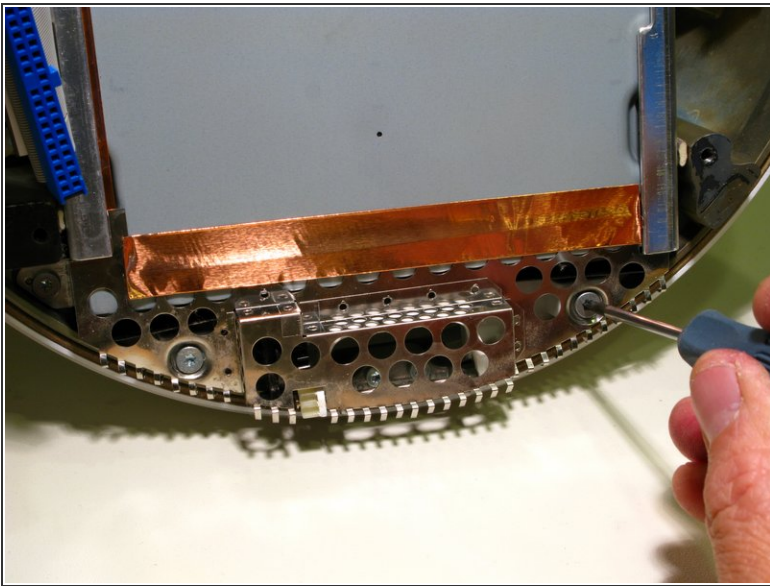## Step 8

- Your iMac should look like this.

Step 9

- Release the Airport and Bluetooth cables from the white plastic clip, mounted to the upper left edge of

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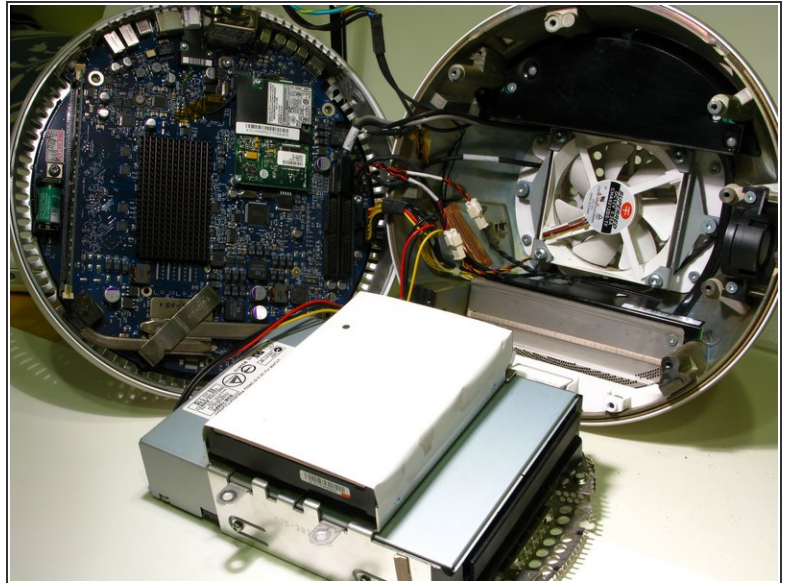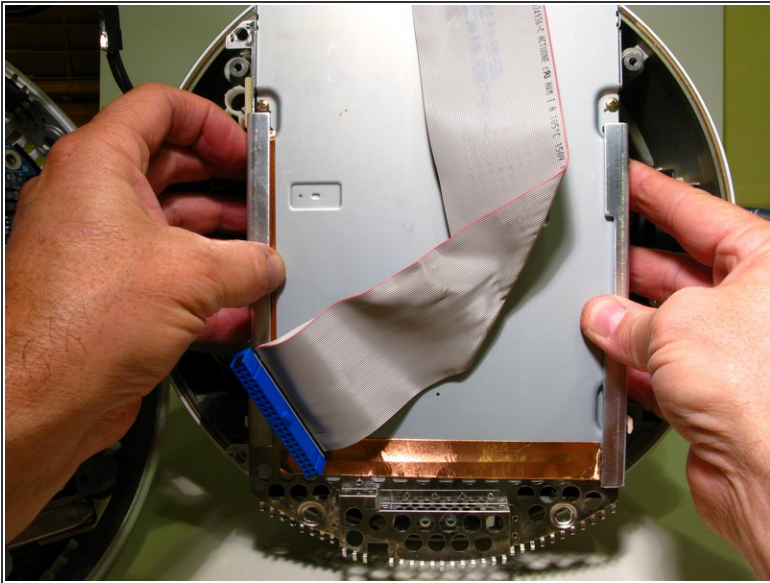the Drive Carrier. Just push down on the clip and it will open.

● Pay very close attention to and make notes of the wire routing through the following steps. It would be easy to inadvertently pinch wires between the drive carrier and the Upper Housing on reassembly.

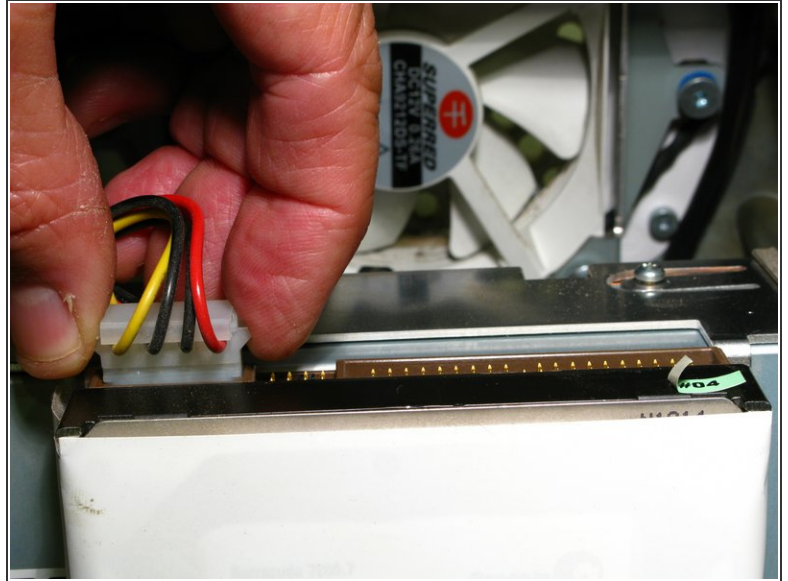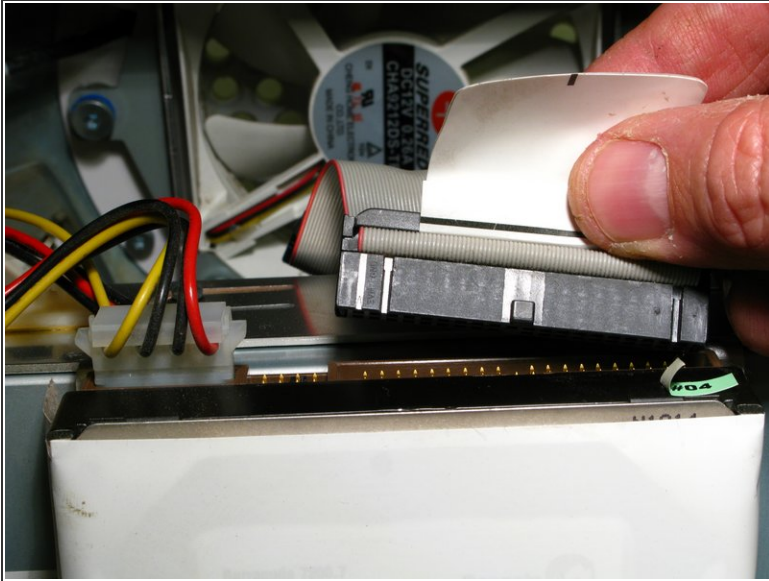● Before proceeding, check once more that there is no strain on cables and connectors.

Step 10

● Remove the (2) 9mm Torx screws securing the Faraday cage (looks something like a cheese grater) to the Upper Housing, with a T10 Torxdriver.

● Then remove the (4) 19mm Torx screws that mount the Drive Carrier to the Upper Housing with a T10 Torxdriver. 2 of the screws are located on the right side of the Drive Carrier near the center and 2 screws are located on left side, near the upper and lower corners.

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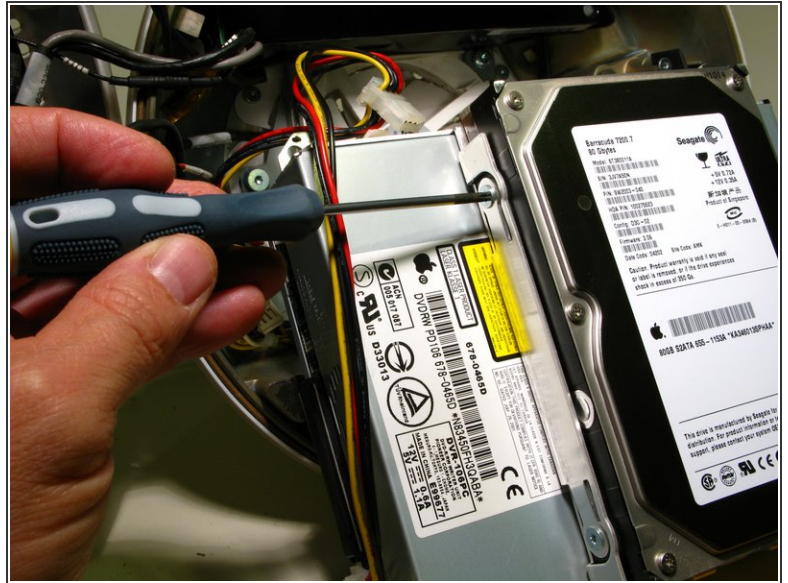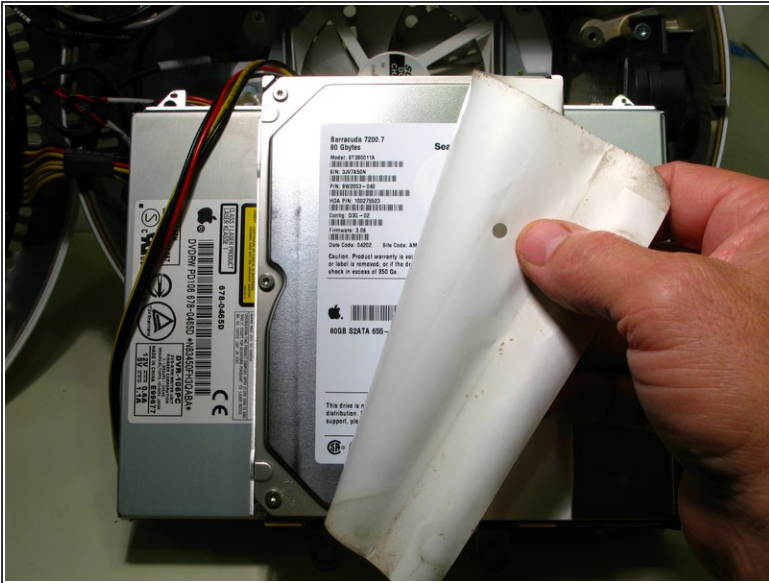
Step 11

- Before you remove the drive carrier, take note of the wire routing, especially of the red, yellow and black drive power cables. Hold the Drive Carrier from both sides and pull it straight toward you. It is a tight fit and may require some wiggling to get it out.

- The fan assembly of your iMac is now exposed. This is a great opportunity to blow the dust out of your machine!
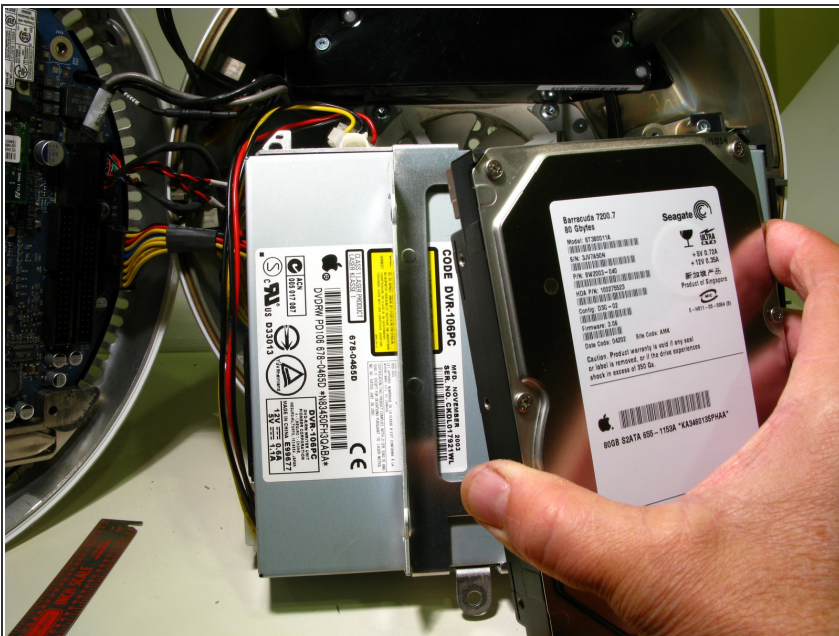
Step 12

- Disconnect the Hard Drive's Data and Power Cables, Pulling the Data Cable connector by its white plastic tab (not the cable itself), and the Power Cable by its outside edges. These connectors can be very tight. Don't get discouraged. Patiently wiggle them back and forth so that they release evenly to avoid bending any pin's.
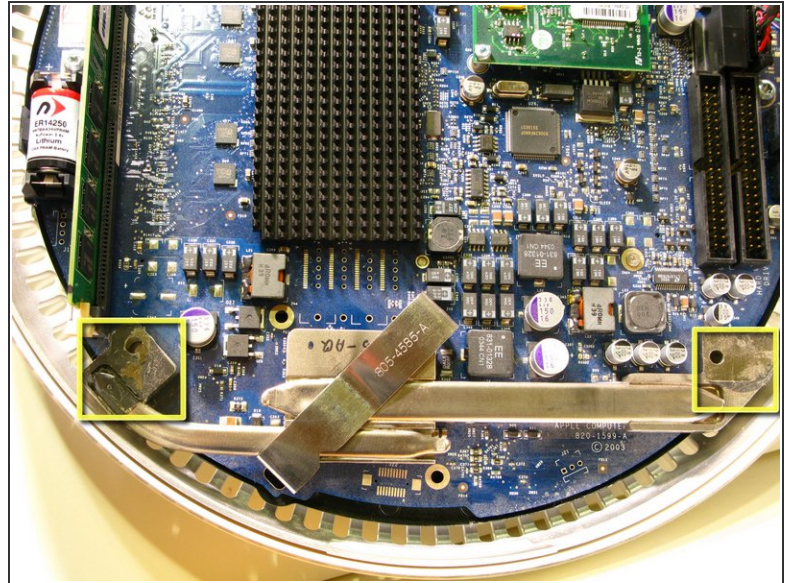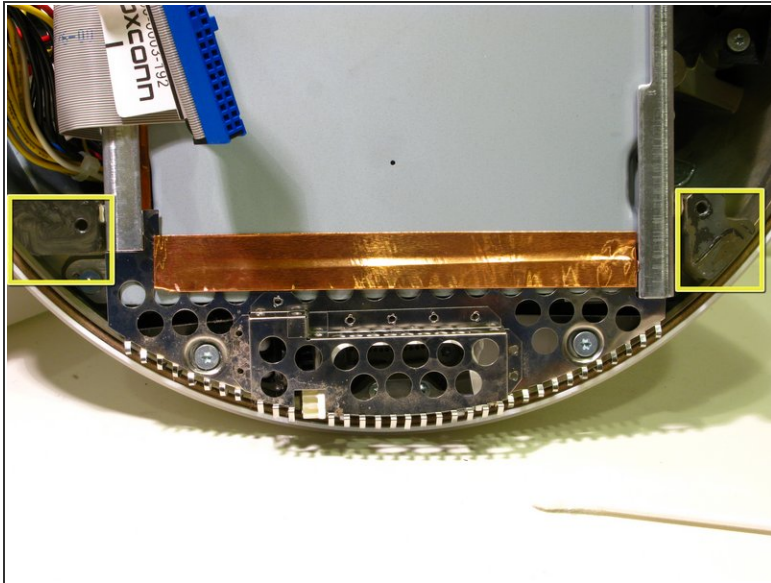
Step 13

- Remove the white plastic protective film from the Hard Drive and save it for your new drive.

- Remove the (4) 6mm Torx screws that hold the Hard drive to the Drive Carrier with a T10 Torxdriver. there are (2) screws located on each side.

Step 14

- Your Hard Drive is free!

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Step 15

⚠ Important information for reassembling your iMac. You must clean and apply thermal paste to the mating surfaces of the CPU Heat Pipe and The Upper Housing, indicated by the yellow squares in the 2 photographs. Follow iFixit's excellent Thermal Paste Guide How to Apply Thermal Paste.

To reassemble your device, follow these instructions in reverse order.

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