

The ultimate guide to Mac keyboard shortcuts



Whether you're a newbie or an experienced Apple user, this guide will show you how to let your fingers do the walking around your Mac.

The fastest way to navigate a Mac is to learn the glut of OS X keyboard shortcuts available at your fingertips.

With just a few keystrokes users can save files, switch between different applications or documents, and even create screenshots on the fly. It's easy, if you know the keys.

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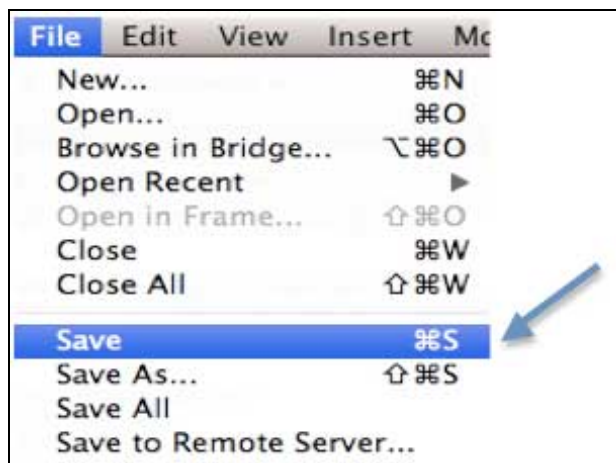
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The basics

If you're new to a Mac you're probably wondering what some of the keys in front of you are supposed to do. Below is a simple outline of the main keys and their symbols used for shortcuts. Get familiar with these core keys on your Mac.

Name	Symbol	Abbreviation
Command	⌘	cmd
Control	⌘	ctrl
Shift	⇧	shft
Option	⌥	opt
Function	F	fn5
Escape	⏏	esc

Most Apple shortcuts are executed using one, or a combination of the above keyboard commands, so it's useful to get familiar with them. For example, in most applications it's common to use the Command + S key to save a document you're working on. To find the correct keyboard shortcut for your favourite application simply use the mouse and click on the file menu. There you will see the corresponding shortcut next to the mouse click. See screenshot below.



Where's my Windows keys?

Looking to alt-tab, copy to clipboard, or print screen like you did in Windows? Now that you've ctrl-alt-deleted from Windows the good news is the Mac has all of those options and more, but you may just have to learn a few different keys to press. Here's some common shortcuts you probably used in Windows and its comparable alternative on a Mac.

Action	Windows	Mac
Copy a folder or file	Control + C	Command + C
Paste a folder or file	Control + V	Command + V
Cut to clipboard	Control + X	Command + X
Search or Find	Control + F	Command + F
Force quit an application	Control + Alt + Delete	Command + Option + Esc
Capture screen	Print Screen	Command + Control + Shift + 3
Find properties	Alt + Enter	Command + I

Print	Control + P	Command + P
Quit a program	Alt + 4	Command + Q
Save a file	Control + S	Command + S
Toggle between applications	Alt + Tab	Command + Tab
Swith to next window	Control + F6	Command + ~
Undo	Control + Z	Command + Z
Select all items	Control + A	Command + A
Rename a folder	Select item + F2	Select item + Enter
New folder	Control + N	Command + N

Right, that's the basics out of the way. The above commands will get you around your Mac a lot faster than pointing and clicking with a mouse or trackpad. However, the shortcuts don't end there. Let's get into some more specific keyboard shortcuts that will turn you into a Mac whiz in no time.

Finder

The Finder is the default file management program used on Mac OS X. While it is intuitive to use with a mouse there are some useful keyboard shortcuts which can save users time opening files and moving them around. Here's some of the more useful shortcuts:

Action	Keyboard Shortcut
Preview a file	Click Spacebar on a selected item
New Finder window	Command + N
Close window	Command + W
Go directly to a folder or file	Command + Shift + G
Connect to a server	Command + K
Find the properties of a file or application	Command + Option + I
Delete Trash without prompt	Option + Shift+ Command + Delete
Delete Trash	Command + Option + Delete
Edit Filename	Press Enter on selected file
Move a file instead of copying	Command + drag file to new destination
Go to "Computer"	Shift + Command + C
Go to "Home"	Shift + Command + H
Go to "iDisk"	Shift + Command + I
Go to "Applications"	Shift + Command + A
Minimise window	Command + M
Minimise all windows	Option + Command + M
Open help	Command + ?
Go to "Favorites"	Shift + Command + F
Undo last action	Command + Z
Change Finder views	Command + 1 or + 2 or + 3 or + 4

Screengrabs

One of the most handy keyboard shortcuts on a Mac is taking screenshots. Here are the options available:

Action	Keyboard Shortcut
Take a picture of the whole screen	Command + Shift + 3
Take a picture of a selected area	Command + Shift + 4
Take a picture of a selected window	Command + Shift + 4 + Spacebar
Take a picture and place it in Clipboard	Command + Shift+ 4 + Control

Eject, Eject!

Is an application not responding or you need to shut down quickly? Don't move your hand towards the power switch before trying these keyboard shortcuts:

Action	Keyboard Shortcut
Force Quit an application	Option + Command + Esc
Quit all applications and restart	Control + Command + Eject
Prompt Restart, Sleep, Shutdown box	Control + Eject
Sleep mode	Option + Command + Eject

Exposé

Expose' is a feature of OS X which allows users to quickly open or hide a window quickly. It can also find the desktop with ease.

Action	Keyboard Shortcut
Expose all open windows	F9 (on some keyboards fn+F9)
Expose all windows in one application	F10 (on some keyboards fn+F10)
Reveal the desktop	F11
Cycle through Exposed Windows	Press Tab after selecting F9 or F10
Slow motion Exposé keys	Press Shift while using the above commands

Dashboard

Dashboard is the widget mode in Mac OS X. If you're widget crazy then here's how to manoeuvre around them:

Action	Shortcut
Open Dashboard	F12
Open and close widget dock	Command + Plus (+)
Cycle to next page of widgets	Command + Left or Right arrows
Reload or refresh widget	Command + R

Dock shortcuts

Action	Keyboard Shortcut
Hide applications other than the one you're working on	Command + Option while clicking on the Dock application
Turn magnification on or off	Command + Shift
Reveal where an application is located in Finder	Command + Application in Dock

Move the dock to the right, left, or bottom
Remove item from Dock
Quit or Force Quit

Hold Shift on Dock divider and drag
Press Control + "Remove item from Dock"
Press Control + "Quit" or "Force Quit"

Spaces

Spaces is the virtual desktop feature in Mac OS X Leopard designed to unclutter your desktop. If you use this feature then this will help clean the clutter faster:

Action

Keyboard Shortcut

Show all Spaces	F8 (fn + F8 on some keyboards)
Move between Spaces	Control + up, down, left, or right
Move to a specific Space	Control + 1, 2, 3, 4 ...
Move all Spaces into one	F8 then C
Move an application to another Space	F8 then Command and drag to another Space

Spotlight

Spotlight is the search functionality inside your Mac that finds files and applications fast. You can easily access it on the top right of your screen but here are a few extra keyboard shortcuts:

Action

Keyboard Shortcut

Open Spotlight	Command + Space
Open Spotlight Window	Command + Option + Space
Launch first result	Enter
First result in each category	Command + up or down
Clear Spotlight search	Esc

Front Row

Front Row is the feature which can turn your Mac into a media centre. Normally the easiest way to navigate to Front Row is using the Apple Remote, but if it's stuck in the vortex of the couch cushions here's how to open and close the application fast:

Action

Keyboard Shortcut

Open Front Row	Command + esc
Close Front Row	Esc
Menu actions	Up, down, left, right
Play or Pause	Space
Volume	Command + up or down

Start-up/boot commands

These commands are useful for advanced users who need keyboard shortcuts during the boot process. Only click on these if you know what you are doing:

Action

Keyboard Shortcut

Boot from disc	C
Start in Firewire target disc mode	T

Safe boot	Shift
Choose start-up disc	Option
Seek a different start-up volume	Command + Option + Shift + Delete
Start-up in single-user mode	Command + S
Start-up in Verbose mode	Command + V

Customising shortcuts

While the above keyboard shortcuts will increase efficiency they might also bring on hand cramping, especially around the bottom left side of the keyboard. The good news is that many of the system-wide shortcuts can be customised for personal preference. To do this, simply click on Systems Preferences ->Keyboard & Mouse ->Keyboard Shortcuts and simply double-click the shortcut you want to change. If at any time you want to change back to the original preferences shipped by Apple, simply click on the "Restore Defaults" button found in this dialog box.

If you have your favourite Mac keyboard shortcut add it in the comment section below and we'll add it to our list over time.