

Mac Basics

The desktop, menu bar, Finder, and Help

The first thing you see on your MacBook Pro is the *desktop*, where you can quickly open apps, search for anything on your MacBook Pro and the web, organize your files, and more.



Menu bar.

Use the menus and icons along the top of the screen to open new windows, connect to a Wi-Fi network, check your Wi-Fi status, change the volume, check your battery charge and more. The menu items change, depending on which app you're using.

Apple Menu.

The Apple Menu in the upper-left corner of the screen contains frequently used items. To open it, click the Apple icon.

Finder.

The Finder is an app that's always open. Use the Finder to organize and locate your files. To open a Finder window, click the Finder icon in the Dock at the bottom of the screen. Force click a file icon to get a quick look at its contents, or force click a filename to edit it.

For more information, see the Apple Support article [Get to know the Finder on your Mac](#)



Help menu.

Help for your MacBook and macOS apps is always available from the Finder. To get help, click the Help menu and choose Mac Help. Or type in the search field and choose a suggestion.

The Touch Bar

Note: Read the following sections if your MacBook Pro has the Touch Bar.

The Touch Bar at the top of your keyboard displays dynamically changing tools, depending on your current activity. The Touch ID (power button) is located on the right side of the Touch Bar. After you set up Touch ID, you can use your fingerprint to unlock your MacBook.



Use the Touch ID (power button).

Press to turn on your MacBook. When you first start up or restart, you need to log in by typing your password. You set up Touch ID during setup or later in the Touch ID pane of System Preferences. After setup, whenever you're asked for your password after you first log in, you can place your finger lightly on the Touch ID sensor to authenticate instead of typing your password.

Note: Press and hold the Touch ID (power button) for a few seconds to turn off your MacBook. To put your MacBook to sleep, choose Apple menu > Sleep

Use the Touch Bar.

The Touch Bar is integrated into many macOS apps to give you handy shortcuts for the tasks you do most, based on your current app and activity. Use familiar gestures - like tap and slide - in the Touch Bar while you work.

The buttons at the right end of the Touch Bar are the Control Strip. You use them to expand or collapse the Control Strip, change the brightness and volume, or use Siri. The other buttons in the Touch Bar depend on the app you're using.



Expand or collapse the Control Strip.

Frequently used system controls, like volume and brightness, are located in the Control Strip on the right side of the Touch Bar. Tap the expand button to expand the strip, then tap buttons or sliders for the settings you want to change. Tap the X button when you finish, or leave the Control Strip open to keep the buttons available.



Customize the Control Strip.

Use the Keyboard pane of System Preferences (choose Apple menu > System Preferences, then click Keyboard) to customize the Control Strip.

Display the function keys.

Press and hold the Function (Fn) key to display the function keys F1 through F12 in the Touch Bar, then tap a function button to use it.



Use the Esc button.

The Esc button usually appears on the left side of the Touch Bar, in the same place the Esc key appears on traditional keyboards. Esc appears on the left even when the other tools on the Touch Bar change.

Tip: In some apps, another tool in the Touch Bar may temporarily replace the Esc button. Tap Done and the Esc button appears.

The Dock

The Dock, at the bottom of the screen, is a convenient place to keep the apps and documents you use frequently.



Open an app or file.

Click its icon in the Dock.

Add an item to the Dock

Drag the item and drop it where you want it. Place apps to the left of the line of the Dock, and add files or folders to the right.

Remove an item from the Dock.

Drag it out of the Dock. The item isn't removed from your MacBook - just from the Dock.

See all open windows in an app

Force click an app in the Dock to access Exposé and view all the app's open windows.

Tip: You can make the Dock larger or smaller, add or remove items, move it to the left or right side of the screen, or even set it to hide when you're not using it. To change how the Dock locks, click the System Preferences icon in the Dock, or choose Apple menu > System Preferences. Then click Dock.

Quickly open apps



Open an app.

Open an app. Click an app icon in the Dock, or click the Launchpad icon in the Dock and click the app you want.

Organize apps in Launchpad.

Launchpad organizes your apps in a grid. Drag an app to a new location to rearrange apps. Drag an app onto another app to create a folder. Drag more apps to the new folder to add them. To remove an app from a folder, drag it out.

Get more apps.

Click the App Store icon in the Dock and search for apps you want. Apps you download from the App Store appear automatically in Launchpad. To quickly get updates for apps and macOS, click Updates in the App Store.

System Preferences

System Preferences is where you personalize your MacBook settings. For example, use Energy Saver preferences to change sleep settings. Or use Desktop & Screen Saver preferences to add a desktop picture or choose a screen saver.

Customize your MacBook Pro. Click the System Preferences icon in the Dock, or choose Apple menu > System Preferences. Then click the type of preference you want to set.



Spotlight

Spotlight is an easy way to find anything on your MacBook Pro, such as documents, contacts, calendar events, and email messages. Spotlight Suggestions offer info from Wikipedia articles, Bing search results, news, sports, weather, stocks, movies, and other sources.

When you search with Spotlight, the preview area on the right provides search results you can interact with: make a call, send an email message, play a song, get directions, even convert currencies. Spotlight can provide answers to math questions or define words, all on your desktop.

Search for anything. Click the icon at the top right of the screen, then start typing.

Tip: Type Command-Space bar to show or hide the Spotlight search field.

For more information, see the Apple Support article [Use Spotlight on your Mac](#)

Mac tips for Windows switchers

If you just switched from a Windows Workstation to a Mac, you might find those articles useful:

[Mac tips for Windows switchers](#)

[What's it called on my Mac?](#)

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