

10 Most-Used, Favorite Mac Treats

#1 The King of All Keyboard Shortcuts

After the essential keyboard shortcuts (Command-C for copy, Command-X for cut, Command-V for paste, Command-S for save, Command-Shift-; to check spelling) this is the keyboard shortcut I use more than any other. It's a trick for jumping quickly between active applications.

Hold down the Command and Tab key at the same time. You will see a large bar in the middle of your screen with all active applications. To jump between the foremost application, simply continue holding down the Command key while tapping the Tab key. This is a super fast way to hop between applications.

You can combine other shortcuts with tab-command. For example, you can use Tab-Command to quickly cut and paste text between applications (as long as they are running) such as TextEdit, Word, Pages, Mail, etc. Or, you can instantly quit applications by Shift-tabbing to the application you want to quit, then (without letting go of the command key) use the Command-Q shortcut. I use this combination all the time to quit applications.

Note that the Command key is found to the left of the spacebar on Mac keyboards. On laptops it's often stamped with an Apple or an icon that looks like a little four-leafed clover.

#2 Easier Renaming of Files and Folders

In the Finder, quickly change a folder or file's name by clicking on it once to highlight it, then click on the Return key. The title of the file or folder will be now be editable.

#3 Efficiently Select Multiple Files

Here are two easy keyboard shortcuts for selecting multiple folders or files at a time. These shortcuts work in most OS X applications, including Address Book, Mail, iTunes, and iPhoto. I use these shortcuts while scrolling through iPhoto to quickly select photos for a photo album. In iTunes, I use these shortcuts to quickly make a music playlist.

To choose a sequential series of files, folders, photos, songs, etc from a larger list or group of files, click one on the first file you want, hold down the Shift key, then click on the last file at the end of the list. All files in between will be highlighted. You can drag and drop the highlighted files or even move them to the trash. This is also how you can highlight blocks of text.

If you want to pick and choose non-sequential files or folders out of a larger group, simply hold down the Command key while selecting files. The selected files will be highlighted. Again, you can drag and drop these highlighted files or move them to the trash.

#4 Easy Maintenance - Clear that Desktop!

Did you know that having many folders, images, old installers, and other files on your OS X desktop can cramp your Mac's performance, including start-up time? This is because desktop images are treated like dynamic windows, rather than static images.

Ideally, the OS X desktop should only be used for temporary, short term storage. It's best to keep all your files stored in their proper locations, as much as possible—documents in the Documents folder, photos and images in iPhoto or the Pictures folder, etc.

You can keep a catch-all folder in your Home Directory, or Documents folder, where you simply stash everything. You can drag that catch-all folder into your dock, where it is always easily accessible.

#5 Match Font Styles in Copy and Paste

Typically when you copy text from one document or application and paste it into a new document or application, the original font, font size, and font color is preserved, possibly clashing with the formatting of the new document.

However, for many Mac applications (Pages, Mail, TextEdit) there is a simple way to force the copied text to match the font of document it's being pasted into. After copying text, navigate to the Menu bar at the top of the screen, click on Edit, and choose "Paste and Match Style" from the drop down menu.

If you prefer to use a keyboard shortcut to paste your text, hold down the following keys at the same time: Command-Option-Shift-V.

#6 Silence the Quack

You've probably noticed that when you adjust the audio volume on your Mac, there is a quacking or clicking sound accompanying the action. This sound can be very annoying, especially when you're wearing headphones.

Fortunately, on most Macs it's easy to silence the quack: simply hold down your Mac's Shift key while adjusting the volume. Voilà ; no quack.

#7 Subscribe to Free, Useful Calendars With iCal

One feature in iCal I've always enjoyed is the availability of free, easy-to-download iCal-compatible calendars. These calendars cover a wide range of topics, including astronomical events, sporting schedules, national and international holidays, school schedules, music tour dates, and many more.

You can find public, shared calendars at Apple's website [by clicking here](#). You can also find over 2400 downloadable iCal ready calendars on [iCalshare](#) by clicking here. However, many of the calendars on iCalshare.com are out of date.

I usually just use Google to find iCal calendars. For example, I was looking for the Red Sox schedule and simply Googled "Red Sox iCal." That brought me directly to a Red Sox page that lists three different iCal compatible calendars.

Once I subscribe to these calendars, I can then sync and share them on all my Macs and my iPhone with MobileMe.

#8 Forward Delete on a Mac

If you use the Delete key on almost any Mac, the cursor travels backwards, erasing the words behind it. However, the Apple Pro keyboard, and many other third party keyboards have a dedicated forward Delete key. It is positioned over the the four arrow keys on the extended Apple Pro keyboard, between the letter portion of the keyboard and the number pad. It is printed with a right-pointing arrow with an "x" in it, and it may also say "del."

Apple notebooks, Apple bluetooth keyboards, and the non-extended Apple keyboard that ships with newer iMacs don't have a dedicated forward delete key. To forward delete on MacBooks, MacBook Pros, and older Apple notebooks, simply hold down the fn key (function key) and press delete. The cursor will gobble up the words in front of it. On MacBooks, MacBook Pros, PowerBooks, and iBooks, the fn key is located on lower left corner of the keyboard, under the Shift key.

#9 Get in Character

Ever wonder where those pesky specials characters that aren't written on your keyboard (e.g. ¢, ©, ®, ™) are when you're writing? They're all listed in Character Palette—part of OS X.

Easy access can be found either as a part of your other Apple Apps (such as Mail, TextEdit, Stickies, etc.) or in the International panel of System Preferences. (**System Preferences > International > Input Menu**)

If you find that you use these symbols a fair amount and would like to see them quickly, check the Character Palette checkbox and "Show input menu in menu bar." The latter will display a little flag icon in the top right-hand corner of your menu bar (how patriotic!).

Another tip for finding some symbols that you use more than others is to remember the keyboard shortcuts. Here's a cheat sheet for my most popular ones:

Accent Acute (´): Option-E; Bullet (•): Option-8; Cent (¢): Option-4; Copyright (©): Option-G; Degree (°): Option-K; Registered (®): Option-R; Trade Mark (™): Option-2;

And, for Mac users, one we've mentioned before and use a lot of: Apple symbol (): Shift-Option-K.

#10 Beyond Dragging and Dropping

On a Mac, if you think you should be able to drag and drop a file or folder from one application into another, you probably can. For example: if you keep Dictionary in your dock, you can select a word and drag it onto the Dictionary icon for a definition. Drag any amount of selected text to the Mail icon, and Mail will pop open a new message with that text inserted. Select any text, drag it to Safari, and Safari will search Google for the selected text.

Create instant bookmarks in Safari by dragging a link into your Bookmarks bar. Create an instant shortcut to a webpage in Safari by highlighting the URL (address) and dragging the text to your Mac's desktop. This creates a link on your desktop—double click it and Safari will bring you directly to the webpage. Save an image from the internet by dragging it out of Safari and dropping it on your Mac's desktop.

Select any text, drag it to Stickies, and you'll have a new Sticky with the selected text. Select any text and drag it to Font Book, and it will create a library with the selected font. If you drag selected text while holding the Option key, it will be copied where you drop it—not moved. Drag and drop CD/DVD burning. Pop a blank CD or DVD into

your optical drive. Drag files onto the CD or DVD's icon. Drag it to the trash and you'll be asked if you want to burn the disk or simply eject it. You'll also have the opportunity to name the disc.