



Nick's Tips to a Better Mac

How to set-up a “fresh” Apple Macintosh computer,
to unlock useful settings

macOS

with Nick Iacona

overview



- **The Issue:**
 - Apple “hides” many useful Desktop, Finder, and Dock settings of brand-new computers / a freshly (re)installed operating system.
 - Your Mac is very sophisticated. Apple simplifies things for basic users, but many advanced settings & features are waiting to be switched on.
- **The Solution:**
 - Know about these useful settings and where to find them.
 - Customize your Mac to get the most out of using your computer.
- Your questions afterward...

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Quick customizations for making the most of your Apple Macintosh computer's Desktop, Finder, and Dock settings.

- Finder > Preferences... > General Tab: check Hard Disks (and Connected Servers), (uncheck Open Folders in Tabs instead of new Windows). Sidebar Tab: check Movies, Music, Pictures, the computer's name. Advanced Tab: check Show All Filename Extensions.
- View > Show View Options: perhaps adjust icons to 32 x 32, Grid Spacing: wider, customize Text Size, toggle Icon Preview,
- Drag the Hard Drive icon, the Applications, Utilities, and your Documents Folders into the Dock. Customize the Icon's looks: Right+Click > Display as Folder, View Content as a List.
- The Dock: Perhaps arrange the System Preferences and the Mac App Store Icons in the Dock beside the default position of the Finder Icon.
- The Dock: the left side and the right side are for different purposes. Adjust size scale by grabbing the Vertical Grabber Bar.
- Battery Icon in the Menu Bar > Show Percentage.
- Date and Time in the Menu Bar > Clock Tab: enable Display Seconds, Flash the Separators, Show Date.
- System Preferences > General > Highlight Color: yellow (like a highlighter color), Sidebar icon size: set to Small, Scroll Bars: Always, Click in the Scroll Bar to: Jump to that spot, enable Ask to Keep Changes.
- System Preferences > Desktop & Screen Saver > Desktop Tab: choose Solid Colors and a medium gray if doing creative visual work.
- System Preferences > Dock > adjust Size, Magnification, Minimize: Scale Effect.
- System Preferences > Security & Privacy > General Tab > uncheck Require Password, and uncheck Disable Automatic Login (only if you're an advanced User...).
- System Preferences > Security & Privacy > General Tab > Allow apps downloaded from: Mac App Store and identified developers (or Anywhere / Allow Anyway; only if you're an advanced User...).
- System Preferences > Security & Privacy > Firewall > Turn on Firewall. Firewall Options button > Enable Stealth Mode.
- System Preferences > Security & Privacy > Privacy tab > Location Services (disable?), Analytics: disable Share Mac Analytics.
- System Preferences > Notifications. Do Not Disturb: enable Turn on Do Not Disturb in Notification Center: enable the time range. Mail: disable show on Lock Screen, disable show message preview.
- System Preferences > Displays > Display tab: disable Automatically Adjust Brightness (unless it's actually wanted).
- System Preferences > Energy Saver: enable Start up after a power failure.
- System Preferences > Keyboard > Keyboard Tab: enable show Keyboard & Symbols Viewers in Menu Bar.
- System Preferences > Mouse > enable Secondary Click "Right Click..." feature. (Very important.)
- System Preferences > Sound > Sound Effects Tab: select a favorite Alert Sound, disable Play User Interface Sound Effects, enable play feedback when volume is changed, enable Volume in Menu Bar. Input Tab: adjust Input Volume to about 75%.
- System Preferences > Bluetooth: enable Show Bluetooth in Menu Bar. Disable Bluetooth (if you're not using that connection method).
- System Preferences > Users & Groups > Password Tab: click the User's avatar graphic to make changes.
- System Preferences > Dictation & Speech > Dictation Tab: enable if that feature is wanted (Tip: enable Use Enhanced Dictation for best results). Text to Speech Tab: choose a favorite System Voice, enable Announce when alerts are displayed > Set Alert Options... > choose a voice, Phrase: edit Phrase List... to enter your own sayings.
- System Preferences > Time Machine: enable the Show Time Machine in Menu Bar
- System Preferences > Accessibility > Display: Increase Contrast can be useful, Zoom: enable Use keyboard shortcuts to zoom (and More Options... to adjust the size of the Zoom).
- Tip: System Preferences > Click+hold the Show All button down displays an alphabetical list.
- File > View > Show Path Bar.

- File > View > Show Status Bar.
- File > View > Hide Toolbar (to make the modern Mac Finder look more like the Mac's Finder originally).
- File > View > Show View Options (to review choices).
- File > View > Customize Toolbar... (to review choices).
- Finder Window > List View: can add Headings by a Right+Click, can rearrange Headings by Click+Dragging. (Example: in the Downloads *f*, add the Date Added Heading, drag it to the 2nd Column position, then click the Heading to sort by the latest date added.)
- Finder Window with Sidebar shown: can drag Icons to rearrange stacking order.
- Tip: the Go Menu + Option key: reveals access to your User's Library *f*.
- File > Find (Command+F) for the Advanced Find feature alternative to Spotlight.
- The Show Desktop command (by 4-finger gesture, or an Function Key setting).
- File > Save > the Expand Button beside Save As... Field shows detailed view.
- File > Print > Show Details button reveals the settings options for your particular printer.
- Command+Tab is the Application Switcher view that allows you to cycle through the open apps (Hold the Command key down, and tap the Tab key).
- The About This Mac info window is how to know more details about the kind of Mac you have.
- Help menu > context-aware help, Keyword Search help.
- Know your Username and Password for your Macintosh account(s), and write it down.



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