

Mac OS X: Additional features of the Dock

The Dock offers useful controls and menus that may not be immediately apparent. You access these additional features with different combinations of modifier keys (such as Option, Control), and with different types of mouse clicks (click versus press and hold). Additionally, learn about Application Switcher, an alternative way to switch between applications without using the Dock or your mouse.

This article applies to Mac OS X 10.1 and later.

About mouse clicks, key combinations

The terms "click" and "press" are used to express nuance in using your mouse--a click is quick and a press is a longer hold. A click is when you activate your mouse button and release it as quickly as possible afterwards. To press the mouse button means that you hold the button down until the desired action happens.

"Drag" means to move your mouse while pressing (holding).

If you press and hold the Control key while clicking your mouse button, that's a **Control-click**. When the name of a key or keys precedes the word "click," and are connected by hyphens, that means you should press and hold those keys before you click, then release them after clicking. So if you see "Option-Control-press", then you would press and hold both the Option and Control keys, and while still holding them press and hold the mouse button. Some of the combinations below do not use the mouse.

Mouse clicks and key combinations for the Dock

- **Click**
Brings the item forward, or opens it if not already open. Brings minimized windows out of the Dock.
- **Control-click**
Reveals contextual menu for item. Menu choices vary per application or file. When used on Dock separator, it reveals Dock preferences. There you can turn magnification and hiding on or off, change the position of the Dock on screen, and change the minimization effect. Choose Dock Preferences to see more options.
- **Command-click**
Reveals the original item in the Finder.
- **Command-Option-click**
Hides other open items, in addition to click action.
- **Press**
Reveals contextual menu for item. Menu choices vary per application or file.
- **Option-press**
Force Quit replaces Quit in menu, in addition to press action.
- **Shift-click**
This applies to minimized windows only. The item is de-minimized in slow motion. You can see the item minimized in slow motion by pressing Shift while minimizing it.
- **Shift-drag**
When used on Dock separator, changes Dock position on screen (left, bottom, right).
- **Option-drag**
When used on Dock separator, resizes Dock to common icon sizes (128 by 128, 64 by 64, 32 by 32, 16 by 16).
- **Command-Option-D**
Hide or Show the Dock. This is equivalent of choosing Dock from the Apple menu and then Turn Hiding On or Turn Hiding Off from the submenu.
- **Command-drag a Dock item from the Dock**
Copy the item without removing it from the Dock.
- **Command-drag an item to the Dock**
Create a Dock item without moving (sliding) existing Dock items while dragging. You might use this feature when dragging to a folder icon on the Dock, for example.
- **Command-option-drag a file to an application's Dock icon**
Attempt to open the file with the application regardless of file type or what application the file is associated with (if any). The application may or may not be able to open the file.

Application Switcher

Besides using the Dock to switch applications, you can use Application Switcher key combinations.

- **Command-Tab**
Cycle forward through open applications. Keep the Command key pressed continuously, while pressing and releasing the Tab key as desired. Pressing it one time will switch to the previous application you were using. You can also use Command-~ (Command-tilde) to cycle backward through open applications. You can also use the mouse, arrow keys, or (if your mouse has one) scroll wheel to select an application in the Command-Tab row.
- **Command-Shift-Tab**
Cycle backward through open applications. Keep the Command key pressed continuously, while pressing and releasing the Tab and Shift keys as desired.
- **Command-H**
Hides an application that you have selected via Application Switcher. The Command key must be held continuously from the time your selection is made until you press H. After hiding an application, you must select another via Application Switcher, or it will return to the foreground when you release Command.
- **Command-Q**
Quit an application. This is a common key combination independent of the Dock, but it may be useful with Application Switcher.

Notes

1. Open ("running") items appear in the Dock with a black triangle.
2. With a compatible multi-button mouse, the default behavior of the right button is equivalent to a Control-click ("right click").
3. Once a contextual menu opens in the Dock (whether by Control-click or by pressing), you can use the up and down cursor keys to make a selection. After making the selection, press Return, Enter, or the mouse button to execute it.

Use hierarchical pop-up menus in the Dock

For more information, see "[Mac OS X: How to Use Pop-Up, Hierarchical Menus in the Dock](#)".

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