

This is a good Tutorial by Scott Haneda, and posted on the osxhelp web site, © 2008 Used by Permission,

The OS X help site also has many useful Mac Tutorials. You may want to copy and paste some of the links and paste them into your Safari Web Browser.

## Primer on Macintosh OS X keyboard shortcuts

Find yourself doing the same things many times over with your computer? If that is the case, you are a prime candidate for learning some of the many keyboard shortcuts built into nearly every application on OS X.

Keyboard shortcuts are simply a way to invoke a command, without actually using your mouse and digging around in a menu. In most cases, it will result in timesaving.

The one aspect of keyboard shortcuts I would like to stress, is you need not feel burdened to learn them all. Pay attention to your own personal workflow; use the shortcuts that are applicable to saving you time. Not everyone will use the same one's, all of you will use at least some.

There are basically three keys on your keyboard you need to learn. More than likely you already know some of them. Almost every single person I talk to is well aware of how to invoke copy, paste, and sometimes cut, via the keyboard.

This tutorial will do nothing more than expand on those same keyboard shortcuts. Keep in mind, some computers have full size keyboards, and some don't, especially laptops, which are missing a few keys. There will also always be differences in some keyboard layouts, try to follow along.

### Let's start with the Command key.

Some people call this the 'Apple Key'. This makes sense as Apple has always printed the Apple logo on this key. New Apple keyboards no longer print the Apple logo on the key, so we will for the foreseeable future, call it the command key.

The symbol looks like a four leaf clover: ⌘

There is actually a rather interesting history behind the creation of this symbol. It turns out the symbol is actually used to [symbolize a Swedish campground or attraction](http://www.folklore.org/StoryView.py?story=Swedish_Campground.txt). If you are at all a fan of Apple history, give it a read. [http://www.folklore.org/StoryView.py?story=Swedish\_Campground.txt]

### Next up is the Option key.

Some people will call the option key, an 'alt' key. While it does not matter, the point is you know what it looks like on your keyboard. Take a second to look for the second most left key: ⌥

### Finally is the Control key

The control key will usually have a small open triangle on it: ⌃

One more key worth mentioning is the shift key: ⇧

It is a simple upwards-pointing arrow. You will often see this symbol in your menus. It simply means to press the shift key, along with whatever other keys you see represented by any of the above icons.

The idea is that pressing one or more of these keys, in combination with some other key, or mouse click, will allow you to perform a menu function. Years ago, as far as

I can tell, there were internal Apple documents that mandated that for every set of keyboard commands, there had to be a menu item to select as well.

This seems to be the case most of the time, but not all. This means, there will be times when a keyboard shortcut is the only way to perform some action. These will be hard to find out about, and are usually hidden away in tech notes and documentation.

The important thing is to not become overwhelmed with trying to memorize and learn every single keyboard shortcut there is. What is important, is to notice when you are doing something repetitiously. This is your cue to take a step back and try to learn a faster and more convenient way.

Taking one of the most widely used keyboard shortcuts, which is used to quit an application. Most people will call this "command-Q".

This means, to quit an application, rather than going to the menu to do so, you can simply press and hold the command key, then press the letter "Q" on your keyboard. This will send the same quit signal to the application as selecting quit from the menu.

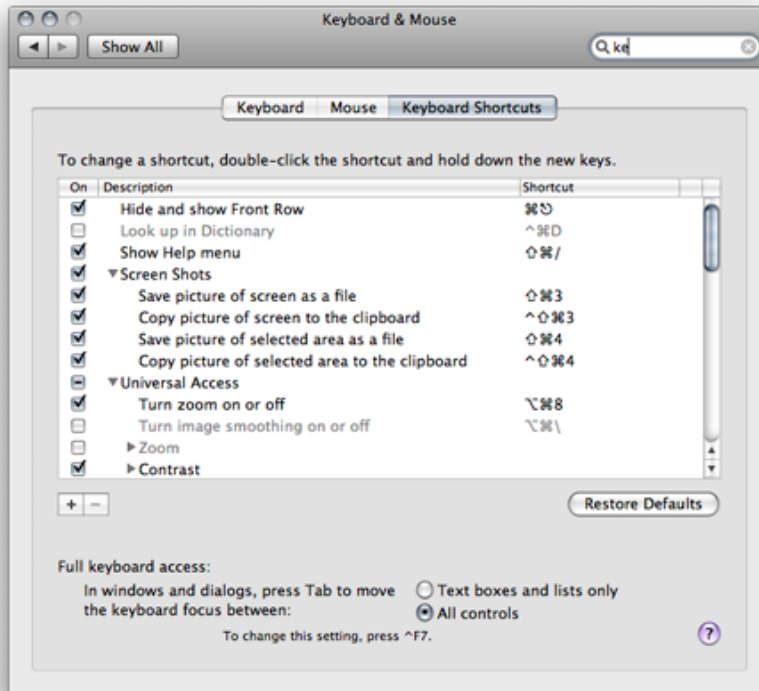
If you look close to the menu, you will notice it looks like this:

Quit (Application Name) ⌘Q

If you take only one thing away from this tutorial, remember to look closely at the menus you are selecting. Nearly all of them will show you the equivalent keyboard shortcut.

Sure, you can look them up in a chart, and try to remember them all, or you can take note of them as you use the menu item, then next time, move to using the keyboard command.

If you are the type of person that wants to see all the commands at once, Apple has a document up called [Mac OS X keyboard shortcuts](#). You can also look in your Keyboard and Mouse System Preferences, which has a list. The nice thing about these is you are free to change them to something else.



At this point, I would recommend you not change or customize your system settings. In a future post, we are going to show you the real power of how to change keyboard shortcuts, and even add your own custom shortcuts when none exists.

A final note of clarification. In most cases, a modern two-button mouse will have the right mouse button set to perform a control-click. This is the exact same as holding down the control key, and clicking once on something. Also, as stated before, remember, all keyboards are not printed alike, or even laid out in the same way. In these cases, you will need to improvise.

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