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BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

The Mac

Everything your Mac can do — and how it helps you — explained in plain English, one step at a time

A plain-English guide for every Mac owner

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For the Mac (macOS 26 Tahoe & macOS 27) · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your Mac manual. Read it in any order and at your own pace — there is no test, and you can't fall behind. Keep it nearby and reach for whatever you need. Every feature comes with what it actually does *for you*, and slow step-by-step directions anyone can follow. It's written for recent Macs running macOS 26 (Tahoe) or macOS 27; if a screen looks a little different on yours, the idea is still the same.

Part 1 — Getting to Know Your Mac

1 A Note from Bill
2 What a Mac Is & Which One You Have
3 The Parts, Buttons & Ports
4 Turning It On, Charging & Sleep
5 The Trackpad & Mouse: How to Point and Click
6 The Desktop & the Dock
7 Logging In, Your Account & Fast Switching
8 Setting Up a Brand-New Mac

Part 2 — Finding Your Way Around

9 The Menu Bar & the Apple Menu
10 Windows: Moving, Sizing & Closing Them
11 The Finder: Your Filing Cabinet
12 Files & Folders: Saving, Finding & Organizing
13 Spotlight: Find Anything in Seconds
14 Control Center & Notifications
15 Mission Control, Spaces & Full Screen
16 Screenshots: Capturing What's on Screen

Part 3 — The Internet & Staying in Touch

17 Getting Online: Wi-Fi & the Internet
18 Safari: Browsing the Web Safely
19 Email with the Mail App
20 Messages: Quick Notes to Family
21 FaceTime: Seeing Their Faces
22 Contacts: Your Address Book
23 Searching the Web Well
24 Video Calls Beyond FaceTime: Zoom & the Rest

Part 4 — Everyday Tasks & Favorite Programs

25 Photos: Your Whole Library, Organized
26 Writing: TextEdit, Notes & Pages

27 Printing from Your Mac
28 Calendar & Reminders
29 Maps: Directions & Places
30 Music, TV & Podcasts
31 Your Apple ID & the App Store
32 Preview: PDFs, Photos & Signing Documents
33 Notes in Depth: Lists, Scanning & More
34 The Small Helpers: Weather, Clock, Calculator & Stocks
35 Shopping & Banking Online, Safely
36 Reading: News, Books & Magazines

Part 5 — Settings & Making It Yours

37 System Settings: The Control Room
38 Making the Screen Easier to See
39 Making It Easier to Hear & Use
40 The Keyboard & Typing Helps
41 Siri: Your Spoken Helper
42 Personalizing: Wallpaper, Screen Saver & the Lock Screen
43 Widgets: Handy Panels at a Glance

Part 6 — Staying Safe & Keeping Your Things

44 Passwords Made Simple
45 Two-Factor: The Extra Lock
46 Keeping the Mac Updated
47 Backups: Never Lose a Thing
48 iCloud: Your Stuff, Everywhere & Safe
49 Spotting Scams & Staying Safe Online
50 Find My: Locating a Lost Mac or iPhone
51 Privacy: Who Can See What

Part 7 — Keeping It Running Smoothly

52 When Something Goes Wrong: First Aid
53 Storage: Making Room
54 Battery Care for MacBooks
55 Connecting Gadgets: Bluetooth, AirDrop & More
56 Keeping Your Programs Up to Date
57 Adding a Screen, Keyboard, Mouse or USB Stick

Part 8 — Your Everyday Cheat-Sheet

58 The Everyday Cheat-Sheet
59 A Plain-English Glossary
60 Where to Learn More & When to Call Bill

PART 1

Getting to Know Your Mac

What a Mac is, which one you have, the parts and ports, turning it on, and the handful of trackpad and mouse moves that run everything. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. Whoever is holding this book right now — this is for **you**. Maybe you just unboxed a brand-new Mac, or maybe one has been sitting on your desk for a while and you've always felt there was more it could do if only someone would slow down and explain it. Either way, you've come to the right place, and I'm glad you're here.

I'm Bill. Helping folks feel at home with their technology is what I do every day, and I wrote this book the same way I'd pull up a chair next to you at your own desk: patiently, in plain English, with no rushing and no fancy words. If I ever use a term you don't know, I'll stop and explain it right then — you won't have to look anything up.

This book is yours — read it any way you like

You do not have to read these pages in order, and there is no test at the end. Start on page one, or flip straight to the chapter that answers today's question and ignore the rest for now. Fold the corners, underline things, scribble in the margins. Keep it in the drawer by your desk and pull it out whenever you need it. It's a reference, not a race — you cannot fall behind.

The big promise: you truly can't break it

Here is the most important thing in this whole book, so I'll say it plainly. **You cannot break your Mac by clicking on it and exploring.** You can't wear it out by pressing the wrong thing. You can't delete something important just by looking around. Clicking, pointing, and poking around to see what happens is exactly how everyone learns — including me.

And if you ever click something and suddenly feel lost — a window opened that you don't recognize — there is always a simple way back to safety. You'll learn several of them in these pages, and they work every single time. So relax your shoulders. Curiosity is rewarded here, and almost everything can be undone.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Why this matters

When you stop worrying about breaking your Mac, you start actually using it — and that's when it becomes genuinely useful: writing letters, seeing the grandkids' faces, keeping your photos safe, and doing the little daily things with a lot less fuss.

And I'm only a phone call away

This book will carry you a long way on your own. But if you ever get truly stuck, you are never stuck alone — that's not how I do things. Call me at **(330) 200-8042** and we'll work it out together, with no judgment and no eye-rolling. There is no such thing as a silly question. The only bad question is the one you talked yourself out of asking.

So take a breath, make yourself a cup of coffee, and let's get to know your Mac together. You're going to do just fine.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

What a Mac Is & Which One You Have

Before we touch a single key, let's answer the simplest question of all: what *is* this machine in front of you?

A computer made by Apple

A **Mac** is simply a personal computer made by the company Apple — the same company that makes the iPhone and iPad. "Mac" is short for "Macintosh," its original name. Like any computer, it lets you write, browse the internet, send email, store photos, watch video, make video calls, and a great deal more. What sets a Mac apart is that Apple designs both the machine *and* the software that runs it, so the two are made to work smoothly together.

That software — the master set of instructions that makes everything work — is called **macOS** (you can say it "mac-oh-ess"). Apple gives each yearly version a nickname after a California place, such as **Tahoe**. You don't need to memorize these; this book is written around recent versions and will tell you if something is brand new.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **"macOS" just means the Mac's software**
>
> You'll see "macOS" here and there. It stands for the operating system — the master set of instructions that runs your Mac. When Apple sends out an update, it's simply handing your Mac a newer, improved copy of that software. Nothing to be afraid of, and we'll cover updates later.

The main kinds of Mac

Macs come in a few shapes. Knowing which one you have helps you follow along, because a laptop and a desktop differ in small ways. Here are the common ones:

If yours is a…	…here's what it is
MacBook Air / MacBook Pro	Laptops — the screen and keyboard fold together into one piece you can carry. The Air is the thin, light everyday laptop; the Pro is heavier and more powerful.
iMac	An all-in-one desktop: the whole computer lives behind a large screen, with a separate keyboard and mouse on your desk.
Mac mini / Mac Studio	A small square box that is the computer itself. You plug in your own screen, keyboard, and mouse. The Studio is the more powerful of the two.

Most recent Macs run on an Apple-made chip with a name like **M1**, **M2**, **M3**, or **M4** (the "brain" of the machine). Some older Macs used chips made by a company called Intel. Everything in this book works the same either way — I'll only mention the difference in the rare spot where it matters.

Finding out exactly which Mac you have

This takes about thirty seconds and is genuinely worth doing, so you can tell me (or anyone helping you) exactly what you've got.

1. Look at the very top-left corner of the screen for a small black **Apple logo** (a little apple with a bite out of it). Click it once.
2. In the little menu that drops down, click **About This Mac**.
3. A window opens showing your Mac's name (such as "MacBook Air"), the year, the chip (such as "Apple M3"), and the macOS version (such as "macOS Tahoe 26").
4. Jot those details on the inside cover of this book so they're always handy.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Knowing your model helps us help you — fast

When you call me and can say "it's a MacBook Air with an M3 chip, running macOS Tahoe," I know in an instant what your screen looks like and can walk you through anything over the phone. It turns a guessing game into a quick, confident answer.

TIP

Screens may look a little different — that's normal

Apple freshens up the look of macOS every year or so. If a button sits in a slightly different spot on your screen, or a color or shape looks different from this book, don't worry — the *idea* is always the same, and so are the words you're looking for. I'll always tell you what to look *for*, not just where to point.

CHAPTER 3

The Parts, Buttons & Ports

Let's walk around your Mac and name the pieces. You don't need to memorize this — just know where to look it up. What you have depends on whether yours is a laptop or a desktop, so I'll cover both.

If you have a laptop (MacBook)

- **The screen** (also called the display) — the top half, where everything appears. On a MacBook it's not a touchscreen, so you don't tap it; you point with the trackpad below.
- **The keyboard** — the rows of letter and number keys on the bottom half, for typing.
- **The trackpad** — the large smooth rectangle below the keyboard. You slide your finger on it to move the pointer, and press it to click. We give it its own chapter next.
- **The power button** — the key in the very top-right corner of the keyboard. On many MacBooks it also reads your fingerprint (that's called Touch ID).
- **The ports** — the small slots along the edges where cables plug in, for charging and for connecting other gadgets.

If you have a desktop (iMac, Mac mini, Mac Studio)

- **The screen** — on an iMac the screen *is* the computer. On a Mac mini or Studio, the screen is separate and plugs into the box.
- **The keyboard and mouse** — separate pieces on your desk. They usually connect without wires, which means they run on a charge or batteries.
- **The power button** — on an iMac it's a small button on the back, lower-left as you face it. On a Mac mini or Studio it's on the box itself.
- **The ports** — slots on the back (and sometimes front) of the machine for cables.

The ports — and what plugs into them

"Port" is just the word for a slot you plug a cable into. Modern Macs use a few kinds. You don't have to learn the names — the plug only fits the slot it belongs in — but here's a plain-English guide:

Port	What it's for
USB-C / Thunderbolt	A small oval slot that a plug fits into either way up. It handles charging on laptops, and connects screens, drives, and most modern gadgets.

Port	What it's for
USB-A	The older, larger rectangular slot (found on some Macs) for older accessories like a printer cable or a memory stick.
HDMI	A wider slot for connecting to a TV or an extra monitor (on some Mac models).
Headphone jack	The small round hole for headphones or earbuds with a cord.
MagSafe (some laptops)	A round magnetic charging port that the power cable snaps onto gently — it pops off safely if someone trips over the cord.

TIP

Use the cable and charger that came with your Mac

When in doubt, reach for the charger and cables that came in the box. They're matched to your machine and will always fit. If you ever need a replacement, Apple-made or well-known brands are the safe choice — and I'm happy to tell you exactly which one to buy.

CHAPTER 4

Turning It On, Charging & Sleep

Your Mac is designed to stay on and ready for weeks at a time — you rarely need to turn it fully off. But it's good to know how, and good to understand the gentle "sleep" it rests in between uses.

Turning it on

Press the **power button** once (top-right of a laptop keyboard, or on the back/box of a desktop) and let go. You'll hear a soft startup sound or see the Apple logo appear, and in a moment you'll arrive at the **login screen**, where you type your password to get in. On a laptop with Touch ID, just resting your finger on the power button can let you in.

Sleep — the everyday "off"

Most of the time, "turning off" your Mac just means letting it **sleep** — a low-power nap where the screen goes dark but everything stays exactly as you left it, ready to wake in an instant. Nothing is lost.

- **On a laptop:** simply close the lid. It sleeps at once. Open the lid to wake it.
- **On a desktop:** it sleeps on its own after a while of not being used. Press any key or move the mouse to wake it. You can also choose **Sleep** from the Apple menu (top-left).

Turning it fully off and back on

Every now and then — say, if the Mac is acting sluggish — a full restart clears the cobwebs, just like with any computer.

1. Click the **Apple logo** at the top-left of the screen.
2. To restart, click **Restart…** It will shut down and come back on by itself.
3. To shut down completely, click **Shut Down…** instead. To turn it on again later, press the power button.

> **TIP**
>
> **A restart is the gentlest fix there is**
>
> If something freezes or the Mac feels slow, choosing **Restart** from the Apple menu solves a surprising number of problems — and it never deletes your photos, documents, or email. When you call me, it's often the very first thing I'll have you try.

Charging a MacBook

If yours is a laptop, it runs on a built-in battery that you top up with the charger. Plug the charger into the wall and the other end into the charging port (or snap on the MagSafe connector). A small light or an on-screen symbol shows it's filling up. Desktops like the iMac simply stay plugged into the wall all the time — no battery to think about.

You may have heard that leaving a laptop plugged in "ruins the battery." For today's Macs, that's an old worry you can set down. It is perfectly fine to leave it plugged in, and fine to run it on battery — the Mac manages all of that for you behind the scenes.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Never caught with a dead laptop

Knowing how your Mac sleeps and charges means it's always ready when you sit down to use it — no long waits, no surprises, and no fretting over the battery. You just open the lid and pick up where you left off.

CHAPTER 5

The Trackpad & Mouse: How to Point and Click

Unlike a phone, you don't usually touch a Mac's screen. Instead you move a little arrow — the **pointer** (or "cursor") — around the screen using either a **trackpad** (on laptops) or a **mouse** (on desktops). Once this is in your hand, the whole Mac opens up. Let's learn it slowly.

Moving the pointer

- **With a trackpad:** rest one finger lightly on the smooth pad and slide it. The arrow on screen moves the same way. Lift and reposition your finger whenever you run out of room — the arrow stays put while your finger is off the pad.
- **With a mouse:** rest your hand on it and slide the whole mouse across the desk. The arrow follows. Pick it up and set it down to reposition, just like the trackpad.

Clicking — the single most important move

To **click** means to press down and let go, once. It's how you choose things: open a program, press a button, pick an answer. Point the arrow at what you want first, then click.

- **On a trackpad:** press straight down on the pad until you feel a gentle click, then release. (You can also just tap the surface, if that's switched on.)
- **On a mouse:** press the left side down until it clicks, then release.

Double-click, right-click, and drag

- **Double-click** — two quick clicks in the same spot, without moving. This opens files and folders. The trick is keeping the arrow still and clicking twice briskly.
- **Right-click** (also called a "secondary click") — this brings up a little menu of extra options for whatever you point at. On a trackpad, click with *two* fingers at once. On an Apple mouse, click the right-hand side. It's wonderfully useful once you get it.
- **Drag** — point at something, press down and *keep holding*, slide it to a new spot, then let go. This is how you move a file, a window, or anything else.

Scrolling — moving up and down a page

When a page or list is longer than the screen, you **scroll** to see more:

- **On a trackpad:** rest *two* fingers on the pad and slide them up or down together. The page moves with them.

- **On an Apple mouse:** slide one finger up or down on the smooth top surface. On other mice, roll the little wheel in the middle.

A friendly cheat-sheet of every move

Move	What it does	On a trackpad	On a mouse
Click	Choose or press something	Press down once	Press left side
Double-click	Open a file or folder	Press down twice	Press left twice
Right-click	Open a menu of options	Click with two fingers	Press right side
Drag	Move something	Hold down & slide	Hold left & slide
Scroll	Move up/down a page	Two fingers, slide	Slide finger / roll wheel

TIP

Practice makes it feel like second nature

Don't just read these — *do* them. Move the arrow around. Click an item. Try a two-finger right-click on the empty desktop and watch a little menu pop up, then press the Escape key (top-left of the keyboard) to make it go away. A few minutes today and a few tomorrow, and your hand will know these without your thinking about it. That's a promise.

GOOD TO KNOW

If the pointer feels too fast or too slow

You can adjust how quickly the pointer moves in **System Settings** (we'll cover Settings later). Look under **Trackpad** or **Mouse** for a "Tracking speed" slider. Slower is often easier when you're starting out — there's no wrong choice, and you can change it any time.

CHAPTER 6

The Desktop & the Dock

Once you've logged in, you land on the **Desktop** — your Mac's home base, named after the top of a real desk. It's the background picture you see, and the place everything sits on top of. Let's make sense of what's here.

What's on the Desktop

- **The background picture** (the "wallpaper") — fills the whole screen. You can change it to a photo you love; we'll do that later.
- **The menu bar** — the thin strip across the very top with the Apple logo on the left and the clock on the right. It's so important it gets its own chapter.
- **The Dock** — the row of colorful icons along the bottom. This is your launcher.
- **Icons** — small pictures that may sit on the desktop itself, each one a doorway to a file, folder, or disk.

The Dock — your launcher of favorites

The **Dock** is the strip of icons along the bottom edge of the screen. Each icon is a **program** (also called an "app," short for application — just a tool that does one job). **One click on an icon opens that program.** That's the whole trick: find the picture for what you want, click it once, and you're in.

Apple puts your most useful programs in the Dock to start with: a web browser called **Safari**, your **Mail**, **Messages**, **Photos**, the **App Store**, **System Settings**, and more. You can add your own favorites and remove ones you don't use — we'll do that in a moment.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **A dot under an icon means it's open**
>
> When you open a program, a small dot appears beneath its icon in the Dock to show it's running. Clicking the icon again brings that program's window back to the front. It's a quiet little reminder of what you have going at the moment.

The special end of the Dock

Off to the right-hand end of the Dock (or the bottom, if your Dock stands on its side) sit a few special spots, divided from the programs by a faint line:

- **The Trash** — the wastebasket icon. Dragging a file here deletes it (but it waits in the Trash until you empty it, so nothing's truly gone right away).
- **Downloads** — a folder that catches things you save from the internet, so you can always find them again.
- **Recently opened programs** may also appear here for easy return.

Adding and removing Dock icons

1. **To add a program:** open it once (it appears in the Dock while running). Right-click its icon, point to **Options**, and click **Keep in Dock**. Now it stays there for next time.
2. **To remove one:** right-click the icon, point to **Options**, and click **Remove from Dock**. (This only takes it off the Dock — the program itself is still on your Mac.)
3. **To rearrange:** drag any Dock icon left or right to a new spot and let go.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Everything you use most, one click away

Once your Dock holds the handful of things you reach for daily — your web browser, your email, your photos — using the Mac becomes effortless. You glance at the bottom of the screen, click the picture you want, and there it is. No hunting, no stress.

TIP

If the Dock is hiding, or you want it bigger

If your Dock seems to have vanished, move the pointer all the way to the bottom edge of the screen and it should slide back into view. To make the icons larger or to stop it hiding, visit **System Settings** → **Desktop & Dock** — there's a size slider and a switch for "Automatically hide and show the Dock." We'll explore Settings fully later on.

CHAPTER 7

Logging In, Your Account & Fast Switching

Each Mac has at least one **user account** — your own private space with your files, your settings, and your password. Understanding it clears up a lot of little mysteries.

Your account and your password

When you set up the Mac, you chose a name and a **password** (sometimes called your "login password"). That password unlocks your account, approves important changes, and keeps a stranger out if the Mac is lost or left unattended. It is different from the password for your email or other websites, and different from your Apple ID (more on that later).

STAY SAFE

Guard your Mac's password — and don't lose it

Your login password is the key to your whole Mac. Never give it to anyone who calls, emails, or messages asking for it — no real company will ever ask. But do keep it somewhere safe that *you* can find, because it's needed for important changes. If you're ever unsure how to store it safely, that's exactly the kind of thing to call me about.

Touch ID: unlocking with a fingertip

Many MacBooks (and some Apple keyboards) have **Touch ID** — a button that reads your fingerprint. Once set up, you can log in, approve purchases, and unlock settings just by resting your finger on it, instead of typing your password each time.

To set up Touch ID

1. Click the **Apple logo** (top-left), then **System Settings**.
2. In the list on the left, click **Touch ID & Password**.
3. Click **Add a Fingerprint** and rest your finger on the Touch ID button over and over as it asks, lifting and setting it down, until it has a full picture.
4. From now on, a gentle touch does the job. Your password is always there as the backup.

If more than one person uses the Mac

A Mac can hold a separate account for each person — say, you and your spouse — so you each have your own files and settings without seeing each other's. You switch between them from the menu bar, and each person's account is protected by their own password. If you'd like to set this up, it lives in **System Settings** → **Users & Groups**, and I'm glad to help you

do it right.

GOOD TO KNOW

One Mac, many lives

Separate accounts are handy even for one person — a "guest" account lets a visitor check their email on your Mac without touching your things. But if you're the only one who uses it, a single account is perfectly fine. Don't add complexity you don't need.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Your Mac, set up just for you

Your account means the Mac remembers *your* wallpaper, *your* email, *your* bookmarks, and the way you like things — and keeps them private behind your password. Sit down, log in, and it's exactly as you left it. That's the quiet comfort of having your own space on the machine.

CHAPTER 8

Setting Up a Brand-New Mac

If your Mac is fresh out of the box, the very first time you turn it on it walks you through a friendly setup, asking a handful of questions. There's nothing to fear here — it's just the Mac getting to know you — but a little guidance makes it smoother. (If your Mac is already set up, you can skip this chapter.)

What it will ask you

Take your time with each screen; there's no clock running. You can click **Back** if you change your mind, and most choices can be changed later in Settings. Here's roughly what to expect, in order:

Setup screen	What to do
Language & country	Pick English and your country so everything reads and works correctly.
Wi-Fi	Choose your home network and type its password, so the Mac can get online.
Apple ID	Sign in with your Apple ID (or create one). This links your photos, contacts, and purchases. If you're unsure, you can skip and do it later.
A Mac password	Create the password you'll type to log in each day. Choose something you'll remember but others couldn't guess.
Touch ID	On laptops, record a fingerprint so you can unlock with a touch.
Siri, location, appearance	A few preferences — all optional, all changeable later.

Moving things over from an old computer

If you're replacing an older Mac, setup offers to copy your files, photos, and settings across using a tool called **Migration Assistant** — a wonderful way to feel at home immediately. It's worth doing, and it's exactly the kind of thing I'm glad to help with so nothing gets left behind.

> **TIP**
>
> **There's no wrong answer in setup**
>
> Every choice setup offers can be changed afterward in System Settings — the wallpaper, Siri, whether you use iCloud. So don't agonize. If you're unsure about something, pick the suggested option (or skip it) and move on; we can always revisit it together once you're up and running.

FROM BILL

Happy to set it up with you

A new Mac is exciting, but that first setup — and moving your old files across — is one of those moments where a friendly hand saves a lot of second-guessing. If you've a new Mac waiting in its box, give me a call and we'll bring it to life together, the right way, at your pace. (330) 200-8042.

PART 2

Finding Your Way Around

The menu bar, windows, the Finder, your files and folders, finding anything with Spotlight, and the two quick panels: Control Center and Notifications.

CHAPTER 9

The Menu Bar & the Apple Menu

Across the very top of your screen runs a thin strip called the **menu bar**. It's always there, and it quietly changes to match whatever program you're using. Once you understand it, a huge amount of the Mac stops being mysterious.

The two halves of the menu bar

- **The left side** holds **menus** — words like **File**, **Edit**, and **View**. Click a word and a list of commands drops down. These belong to whatever program is open at the moment, so they change as you move between programs.
- **The right side** holds small **status icons** — the clock, the Wi-Fi symbol, the battery, the volume, and a few buttons we'll meet shortly. You read these at a glance, and some you can click.

The Apple menu — always in the top-left corner

At the far left sits the black **Apple logo**. Clicking it opens the **Apple menu**, which is the same no matter what program you're in. It's a reliable home base, and it holds some of the most useful commands on the whole Mac:

In the Apple menu	What it does
About This Mac	Shows which Mac you have and which macOS version it's running.
System Settings	Opens the big panel where you adjust everything (its own part, later).
App Store	Where you find and install new programs.
Sleep / Restart / Shut Down	Put the Mac to sleep, restart it, or turn it fully off.
Log Out	Leave your account (handy if others share the Mac).

How menus work — and what the symbols mean

When you click a menu word and the list drops down, you simply click the command you want. A few things you'll notice in these lists:

- Items in **grey** aren't available right now — that's normal, not a fault.
- An item with **three dots** after it (like "Save As…") opens a further window to ask you something, rather than acting instantly.
- An item with a little **arrow** on its right opens a further list (a "submenu") when you point at it.

- The odd symbols on the right (like ⌘ or ⇧) are **keyboard shortcuts** — optional faster ways to do the same thing from the keyboard. Ignore them for now; the menu always works.

TIP

Lost in a program? The menu bar has the answer

Whenever you're not sure how to do something in a program — print, save, find a setting — look up at the menu bar. The command is almost always hiding under **File**, **Edit**, or **View**. Clicking slowly through those menus is a perfectly good way to discover what a program can do. You can't hurt a thing by looking.

CHAPTER 10

Windows: Moving, Sizing & Closing Them

When you open almost anything on a Mac, it appears inside a **window** — a rectangle you can move, resize, and set aside. You'll often have several open at once, like papers spread on a desk. Here's how to handle them with ease.

The three little buttons (the "traffic lights")

In the top-left corner of every window sit three small colored dots, nicknamed the traffic lights. Point at them and little symbols appear inside. Here's what each does:

Button	What it does
Red dot	Closes the window. (Note: this shuts the window, but the program itself may stay running — more on that soon.)
Yellow dot	Minimizes — tucks the window down into the right end of the Dock, out of the way. Click its little thumbnail in the Dock to bring it back.
Green dot	Fills the whole screen with this window ("full screen"). Point back at the green dot, or press the Escape key, to come back out.

Moving and resizing a window

- **To move a window:** point at the strip along its very top (the "title bar"), press down, drag it wherever you like, and let go.
- **To resize it:** point at any edge or corner until the arrow changes shape, then drag to make it bigger or smaller.
- **To bring a buried window to the front:** click any part of it that you can see, or click the program's icon in the Dock.

Tidying windows side by side

Recent versions of macOS make it easy to snap windows neatly together — wonderful for having a web page on one half of the screen and your writing on the other. Point at the green dot in the top-left of a window and hold the pointer there for a second; a little menu of tidy arrangements appears, and you click the one you want. You can also drag a window to the very edge of the screen and it will offer to snap into place.

GOOD TO KNOW

Closing a window vs. quitting a program

This trips up almost everyone, so let's be clear. Clicking the **red dot** closes that *window*, but on a Mac the *program* often keeps running quietly (you'll still see the dot under its Dock icon). To fully **quit** a program, click its name at the top-left of the menu bar and choose **Quit**, or press the Command key and the letter Q together. This is normal and nothing to worry about — but it's handy to know.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Spread out like papers on a desk

Windows let you keep several things going at once and glance between them — a recipe beside your shopping list, a photo beside the email you're writing. Learning to move and size them turns a cluttered screen into a calm, organized workspace that works the way you do.

CHAPTER 11

The Finder: Your Filing Cabinet

The **Finder** is the program that lets you see and organize everything stored on your Mac — your documents, photos, downloads, and more. Think of it as a filing cabinet with a window onto every drawer. It's always running, and it's the smiling blue-and-white face icon at the left end of the Dock.

Opening a Finder window

Click the **Finder** icon (the blue smiling face) in the Dock. A window opens showing your files. If a Finder window is already open behind others, this brings it to the front.

The sidebar — your shortcuts down the left

Down the left-hand side of every Finder window runs the **sidebar**, a list of handy places. Click any one to jump straight to it:

Sidebar place	What's kept there
Desktop	Anything sitting on your desktop background.
Documents	The main home for letters, spreadsheets, and files you make.
Downloads	Things you've saved from the internet or email.
Pictures	Where your photo library lives.
Applications	Every program installed on your Mac.
iCloud Drive	Files kept safely in the cloud and shared across your Apple devices.

Moving around: into folders and back out

- **To open a folder or file:** double-click it.
- **To go back** where you just were: click the **<** back arrow near the top-left of the window (just like a web browser).
- **To change how things look:** the buttons near the top let you view your files as icons, as a tidy list, in columns, or as a gallery of previews. Try each and keep whichever you like — it changes nothing but the view.

TIP

The View menu is your friend

If a Finder window looks cluttered or things seem out of order, click **View** in the menu bar at the top. You can sort items by name or date, make the icons bigger, and tidy everything into a grid. It's all harmless to try — you're only changing how things are shown, never the files themselves.

CHAPTER 12

Files & Folders: Saving, Finding & Organizing

Everything you make or save on a Mac — a letter, a photo, a downloaded form — is a **file**. Files live inside **folders**, which are just labeled containers, exactly like paper folders in a drawer. Getting comfortable here means never losing track of your things again.

Saving a file for the first time

When you've written or made something and want to keep it, you **save** it. The first time, the Mac asks what to call it and where to put it:

1. In the menu bar, click **File**, then **Save** (or press Command and S together).
2. A small window appears. Type a clear **name** you'll recognize later, like "Letter to the bank."
3. Choose **where** to keep it — **Documents** is a sensible home for most things. Click the place in the sidebar of that little window.
4. Click **Save**. From now on, the program remembers — just press Command-S now and then to save your latest changes.

> TIP
> **Give files names you'll actually understand**
> A file named "Document 1" tells you nothing in six months. A file named "Insurance renewal 2026" tells you everything. Spend the extra three seconds to name things plainly — your future self will thank you, and so will anyone helping you find something.

Making a new folder to stay organized

1. Open a Finder window and go to where you want the new folder (say, Documents).
2. In the menu bar click **File**, then **New Folder** (or right-click an empty spot and choose **New Folder**).
3. A folder appears with its name ready to type. Type a clear name, like "Medical," and press **Return**.
4. Now you can drag related files into it to keep them together.

Moving, copying, renaming & deleting

- **Move a file:** drag it onto a folder and let go. It hops inside.

- **Rename a file:** click its name once, pause, then click again (or press Return) — the name becomes editable. Type the new name and press Return.
- **Copy a file:** right-click it and choose **Copy**, then go where you want the copy, right-click an empty spot, and choose **Paste**.
- **Delete a file:** drag it to the **Trash** at the end of the Dock, or right-click it and choose **Move to Trash**. It isn't gone for good yet — see below.

The Trash — your safety net

Deleting a file just moves it to the **Trash**, where it waits. If you change your mind, open the Trash (click its Dock icon), find the file, right-click it, and choose **Put Back** — it returns to where it came from. The Trash only truly empties when you tell it to (right-click the Trash and choose **Empty Trash**), so you always get a second chance.

GOOD TO KNOW

"The cloud" in plain English

You'll hear about files being kept "in the cloud" or in **iCloud Drive**. The cloud is simply a secure storage room on the internet that Apple keeps for you. A file saved there is safe even if something happens to your Mac, and you can reach it from your iPhone or iPad too. We'll cover iCloud properly in the safety part — for now, just know "the cloud" means "kept safely online."

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Never lose a thing again

A simple habit — clear names, a few well-labeled folders, and saving to Documents — means every letter, form, and photo has a home you can find in seconds. No more hunting, no more "where did I put that?" Organization isn't about being tidy for its own sake; it's about peace of mind.

CHAPTER 13

Spotlight: Find Anything in Seconds

If you remember only one trick from this whole book, let it be this one. **Spotlight** is a search box that finds anything on your Mac — a program, a file, an email, even the answer to a quick question — in a second or two, without your having to remember where it lives.

Opening Spotlight

1. Look at the top-right of the menu bar for a small **magnifying glass** icon, and click it. (Or, from anywhere, hold the **Command** key and tap the **space bar** — this is the fast way, and well worth learning.)
2. A search box appears in the middle of the screen.
3. Start typing what you're after — the name of a program, a few words from a document, a person's name.
4. Results appear as you type. Click the one you want, or use the arrow keys and press **Return**, and it opens.

What Spotlight can find

- **Programs** — type "mail" to open Mail, "photos" to open Photos. Often faster than hunting in the Dock.
- **Files and folders** — type a few words from the name or even the contents.
- **Quick facts** — type a word to get its definition, or a sum like "12 x 15" to see the answer, or "weather" for the forecast.
- **Emails, contacts, and calendar events** — type a name or subject.

> **TIP**
>
> **When you can't find a program, let Spotlight find it**
>
> New to the Mac, people often lose track of where a program lives. Stop hunting. Press **Command-space**, type the first few letters of the program's name, and press Return. It opens every time. This single habit removes most of the frustration of a new Mac — I promise.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

The whole Mac, one keystroke away

Spotlight means you never have to memorize where things are kept. Think of what you want, type a few letters, and it's in front of you. It turns a big, unfamiliar machine into something that answers to a few taps of the keyboard. Learn this one thing and everything else gets easier.

CHAPTER 14

Control Center & Notifications

Tucked into the right end of the menu bar are two handy panels: **Control Center**, your row of quick switches, and **Notifications**, your list of recent alerts. Both are one click away once you know where to look.

Control Center — your quick switches

Control Center gathers the controls you reach for most — Wi-Fi, sound, brightness, and so on — into one tidy panel, like the row of light switches by your front door. Click the **Control Center** icon near the top-right of the menu bar (it looks like two little sliders or toggle switches). Here's what you'll find:

Switch	What it does
Wi-Fi	Connect to your home internet or a nearby network. Click to turn on/off or pick a network.
Bluetooth	Connect wireless gadgets like headphones, a mouse, or hearing aids.
Sound	A slider to set the volume up or down.
Display	A slider to brighten or dim the screen.
Focus / Do Not Disturb	Quiet all interruptions for a while — during dinner or a nap.
Screen Mirroring	Send what's on your screen to a nearby TV or Apple device.

A tap turns each one on or off; a filled-in or colored button means it's switched on. Click the little arrow or ">" beside an item to open its fuller options. When you're done, click anywhere else to put the panel away.

Notifications — your recent alerts

A **notification** is a little message from a program — a new email arrived, a calendar reminder, an update is ready. They slide in briefly at the top-right, then wait for you in **Notification Center**.

1. Click the **clock** (the date and time) at the top-right of the menu bar.
2. A panel slides out showing your recent notifications, and below them, handy little panels called **widgets** — the weather, your calendar, a clock.
3. Click a notification to open whatever it's about, or brush it aside to dismiss it. Click the clock again, or anywhere else, to close the panel.

TIP

Too many interruptions? Turn on a Focus

If notifications feel like too much — dinging during a movie or a visit — open Control Center, click **Focus**, and choose **Do Not Disturb**. Your Mac goes quiet until you turn it back off. You can also fine-tune which programs may notify you at all in **System Settings** → **Notifications**. Your Mac should serve you, not nag you.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Your whole Mac's status, at a glance

Between Control Center and the little icons up top, you can see and change the everyday things — am I online? how loud is it? is it about to interrupt me? — without digging through menus. One click up top, and you're in command of the machine rather than the other way around.

CHAPTER 15

Mission Control, Spaces & Full Screen

When you have several windows open at once, the screen can start to feel crowded. The Mac has three gentle tools for keeping all that tidy, and once you know them, a busy screen stops feeling chaotic and starts feeling organized.

Mission Control: see everything at once

Mission Control spreads every open window out in front of you, like laying all your papers on a big table so you can see them at a glance and pick the one you want.

1. Swipe **up with three or four fingers** on the trackpad (or press the Mission Control key on the keyboard — it looks like three little rectangles).
2. All your windows shrink and spread out so none is hidden.
3. Click the one you want, and it jumps to the front. Swipe down with three fingers (or press the key again) to leave Mission Control.

Full Screen: one window, no distractions

Clicking the **green dot** at the top-left of a window fills the whole screen with just that window — lovely for reading or writing without anything else in view. The menu bar tucks away; slide the pointer to the very top to bring it back. Press the **Escape** key, or point at the green dot again, to come back out.

Spaces: more than one desktop

You can even have several separate desktops, called **Spaces** — say, one for email and browsing, another for writing — and slide between them. It's an advanced comfort, not a necessity. In Mission Control, a strip along the top lets you add a Space with the **+** and switch between them. If it's more than you need, simply ignore it; one desktop is perfectly fine.

> **TIP**
>
> **Three fingers up is the move to remember**
>
> Of everything here, the one gesture worth keeping is the three-finger swipe up for Mission Control. When you've lost a window or the screen feels cluttered, that swipe shows you everything at once so you can grab what you want. It's the "where did that go?" button.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A calm screen, however much you have going

These tools mean a busy screen never has to feel overwhelming. Spread everything out to find what you want, give one window the whole screen when you want to focus, and keep separate workspaces if that suits you. The Mac bends to however tidy or busy you like to be.

CHAPTER 16

Screenshots: Capturing What's on Screen

A **screenshot** is a picture of whatever is on your screen at that moment. It's wonderfully handy: to save a confirmation page, to capture an error message to show me, or to keep a recipe you found. The Mac makes them easy.

Taking a screenshot

- **The whole screen:** hold **Shift**, **Command**, and the number **3** together. You'll hear a little camera click.
- **Just part of the screen:** hold **Shift**, **Command**, and **4**. The pointer becomes a crosshair — drag a box around the part you want, then let go.

A small thumbnail of your screenshot appears briefly in the bottom-right corner. Click it to mark it up or share it right away, or ignore it — the picture saves itself to your Desktop as a file you can find later.

TIP

A screenshot is the best way to show me a problem

If something odd appears on your screen — a confusing message, an error, a pop-up — take a screenshot (Shift-Command-4 to grab just that part) and email it to me. A picture tells me in a second what might take ten minutes to describe over the phone. It's the single most helpful thing you can do when asking for help.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Keep a copy of anything you see

Screenshots turn anything on your screen into a keepsake or a record — a booking confirmation, a photo from a video call, a map, a receipt. No need to copy it down by hand; just capture it and it's yours to save, print, or send.

PART 3

The Internet & Staying in Touch

Getting online, browsing safely with Safari, email in the Mail app, and keeping close with Messages, FaceTime, and Contacts.

CHAPTER 17

Getting Online: Wi-Fi & the Internet

Almost everything wonderful about a Mac — email, the web, video calls, photos that back themselves up — needs an internet connection. For most people at home, that connection is **Wi-Fi**: the internet carried through the air from a little box in your home to your Mac, with no cable to plug in.

What you need

- **Internet service** from a company (such as Spectrum, AT&T, or a local provider) that you pay monthly. This brings the internet into your home.
- **A router** (sometimes combined with the modem into one box) — the little box, often with blinking lights, that broadcasts your Wi-Fi.
- **Your Wi-Fi name and password** — the network's name and the secret word that lets your Mac join. It's often printed on a sticker on the router itself.

Connecting your Mac to Wi-Fi

1. Click the **Control Center** icon (the two sliders) near the top-right of the menu bar.
2. Click **Wi-Fi**, and make sure its switch is on (filled in).
3. A list of nearby network names appears. Find **yours** and click it.
4. Type the Wi-Fi **password** exactly as printed (it's case-sensitive — capital and small letters matter), and click **Join**.
5. Once connected, the Wi-Fi symbol in the menu bar fills in with curved lines. Your Mac will remember this network and rejoin it on its own from now on.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> **Wi-Fi vs. the internet vs. the web**
>
> These three get muddled, so here's the plain version. The **internet** is the giant worldwide network. **Wi-Fi** is just the wireless way your Mac reaches it inside your home. The **web** (short for World Wide Web) is the part of the internet made of pages you read in a browser. So: Wi-Fi gets you *onto* the internet, and the web is one of the things you *do* there.

TIP

If the internet stops working, restart the box

Nine times out of ten, a dead internet connection is fixed by unplugging your router from the wall, waiting a full minute, and plugging it back in. Give it a couple of minutes to wake up fully. It's the same "turn it off and on again" trick that fixes so much — and it's always safe to try. If that doesn't do it, give me a call.

CHAPTER 18

Safari: Browsing the Web Safely

Safari is the Mac's built-in **web browser** — the program you use to visit websites, read the news, look things up, shop, and watch videos. Its icon is a blue compass in the Dock. Let's learn to drive it comfortably and safely.

The parts of the Safari window

- **The address bar** — the long box across the top. This is where you type either a website's address (like *weather.gov*) *or* what you're looking for (like "weather in Kent Ohio"). Both work — just type and press **Return**.
- **Tabs** — the row just below, where each open web page gets its own labeled tab, like file folders along the top. Click a tab to switch to that page.
- **The back and forward arrows** — top-left; click **<** to return to the page you were just on.

Visiting a website

1. Click once in the **address bar** at the top (the text highlights, ready for you).
2. Type the website address or a few words describing what you want.
3. Press **Return**. The page loads.
4. To follow a **link** (underlined or colored text, or a button), click it once — it takes you to a new page. Use the back arrow to return.

Tabs: keeping several pages at once

A **tab** lets you keep a page open while you look at another, the way you might keep several books open on a table. Click the small **+** at the right end of the tab row to open a new tab, then type a new address. Click the small **x** on a tab to close that page. If a page ever misbehaves, closing its tab and opening a fresh one often fixes it.

Bookmarks & Favorites: saving places you love

When you find a site you'll return to — your bank, a favorite recipe site, the local news — save it as a **bookmark** so you needn't retype the address:

1. Visit the site.
2. In the menu bar, click **Bookmarks**, then **Add Bookmark** (or click the share icon and choose **Add Bookmark**).

3. Choose **Favorites** so it appears right under the address bar, give it a short name, and click **Add**.
4. From now on it's one click away. You can also just start typing its name in the address bar and Safari will suggest it.

SCAM ALERT

The address bar is your safety check

Before you type a password or card number into any website, glance at the address bar. Is it *exactly* the site you meant to visit (your real bank, not "bank-secure-login.com")? A small padlock appears to show the connection is private, but a padlock alone does not mean a site is honest. If anything looks off, or a page suddenly demands your login "to verify," stop. Don't type anything. Call me — those "is this real?" calls are exactly what I'm here for, no charge.

TIP

Make web pages easier to read

If the text on a page is too small, hold the **Command** key and tap the **+** key to make everything bigger (Command and **-** to shrink it back). You can also click **View** in the menu bar and choose **Zoom In**. Your eyes will thank you, and the page remembers your choice for next time.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

The whole world, from your chair

Safari puts the library, the newspaper, the shops, the weather, and the answer to nearly any question a click away. Once browsing feels natural, your Mac becomes a window onto everything — and you steer it entirely at your own pace.

CHAPTER 19

Email with the Mail App

Email (short for electronic mail) lets you send and receive written messages — and photos, forms, and more — to anyone in the world, in seconds, for free. The Mac's built-in program for it is called **Mail**, with a blue stamp-and-envelope icon.

Your email address

To use email you need an **email address** — something like *yourname@icloud.com* or *yourname@gmail.com*. The part before the @ is your chosen name; the part after is the company that runs it. If you have an Apple ID (we'll meet it soon), you likely already have an iCloud email address. If you're not sure what yours is, that's an easy thing to sort out together.

Reading your mail

1. Click the **Mail** icon in the Dock.
2. Your **Inbox** — the list of messages you've received — appears. Unread ones have a blue dot beside them.
3. Click any message once to read it in the reading area beside or below the list.
4. New mail arrives on its own; click **Inbox** at the top-left any time to be sure you're seeing the latest.

Writing and sending a message

1. Click the **New Message** button — a square with a pencil — near the top.
2. In the **To** box, type the email address of the person you're writing to. (If they're in your Contacts, just start their name and pick them from the list.)
3. Click in the **Subject** box and type a short summary, like "Lunch on Friday."
4. Click in the big area below and type your message.
5. When you're happy, click the **Send** button (a paper airplane). Whoosh — it's on its way.

Replying, and sending a photo

- **To reply:** open the message and click the **Reply** arrow. The person's address fills in for you — just type and send.
- **To attach a photo or file:** while writing, click the **paperclip** (or drag a file straight into the message), choose the file, and it rides along with your email.

SCAM ALERT

Email is where scammers do their fishing

Be cautious with email from strangers, and even with email that *looks* like it's from a company you know. Warning signs: it rushes you ("act now or lose your account!"), asks for a password or payment, or wants you to click a link to "verify" something. **Real companies don't do this.** Never click links or open attachments you weren't expecting. When in doubt, don't — set it aside and call me. It's never a bother.

TIP

Junk mail: let the Mac help

Unwanted mail is a fact of life. In Mail, if a message is junk, select it and click the **Junk** button (a thumbs-down or trash-with-a-flag icon) — this teaches Mail to filter similar messages away from your inbox over time. You can also just delete anything you don't want; deleting a message never harms your Mac.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A letter across the world in a heartbeat

Email keeps you in touch with family near and far, lets you handle business without a stamp or a trip to the mailbox, and keeps a tidy record of it all. Once it feels comfortable, it's one of the most useful things your Mac does.

CHAPTER 20

Messages: Quick Notes to Family

Messages is the Mac's app for the short, back-and-forth notes we used to call "text messages" — quick hellos, a photo of the garden, "running five minutes late." Here's the lovely part: if you also have an iPhone, the very same conversations appear on both, so you can type comfortably on the Mac's big keyboard.

Blue bubbles and green bubbles

You'll notice messages come in two colors, and it helps to know why:

- **Blue bubbles** — a message sent between Apple devices (iPhone, iPad, Mac) using Apple's own iMessage service. These travel over the internet and can include high-quality photos and more.
- **Green bubbles** — a message to or from a non-Apple phone (an Android phone, say). These still work perfectly well; they just go by the older text-message road.

Sending a message

1. Click the **Messages** icon (a green speech bubble) in the Dock.
2. Click the **New Message** button (a pencil-and-square) at the top.
3. In the **To** box, type a name from your Contacts, or a phone number or email address.
4. Click in the box at the bottom, type your note, and press **Return** to send.
5. Their reply appears right in the same conversation, which stays in the list on the left for next time.

Sending a photo

To send a picture, click the **+** or the photos icon beside the typing box, pick **Photos**, choose the picture, and press Return. It's a delightful way to share a moment with the grandkids in seconds.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **Why type on the Mac at all?**
>
> If you have an iPhone, you might wonder why message on the Mac. The answer is comfort: a full-size keyboard and a big screen make longer notes far easier than thumbing on a little phone. Everything stays in sync, so you can start a chat on one and finish it on the other.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Little hellos keep people close

A quick "thinking of you" or a photo of the sunset keeps the threads of family life woven together between the longer calls and visits. Messages makes those little hellos effortless — and from the Mac, comfortable to type.

CHAPTER 21

FaceTime: Seeing Their Faces

FaceTime is the Mac's app for **video calls** — a phone call where you can *see* each other, free, over the internet. For staying close to family far away, nothing quite beats seeing a grandchild's face light up. Every Mac has a little camera built in above the screen, so you're ready to go.

Making a FaceTime call

1. Click the **FaceTime** icon (a green video camera) in the Dock.
2. Click **New FaceTime** and type the name, phone number, or email of the person you're calling (they need an Apple device for FaceTime, or you can send them a link — see the tip).
3. Click the green **FaceTime** button to start the call.
4. When they answer, you'll see them on screen and a small picture of yourself in the corner. Talk away!
5. To hang up, click the red **X** (or the red phone) button.

Answering a call

When someone FaceTimes you, a notice appears at the top-right of the screen. Click the green **Accept** button to answer, or the red one to decline. That's all there is to it.

> **TIP**
>
> **FaceTime now works with non-Apple folks too**
>
> FaceTime began as an Apple-only feature, but these days you can invite anyone. Click **Create Link** in FaceTime, then send that link to family by email or Messages — they can join from a Windows computer or Android phone right in their web browser, no Apple device needed. A grand way to include the whole family.

> **TIP**
>
> **A few friendly video-call habits**
>
> Sit with a window or lamp *in front* of you, not behind, so your face is lit. Prop the laptop up so the camera is near eye level rather than looking up your chin. And look at the little camera dot now and then, not just the screen — to them, it feels like you're meeting their eyes. Small things, but they make the call feel warm.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

The next best thing to being there

A video call turns "how are you?" into really *seeing* how someone is — their smile, the new haircut, the baby's first steps. Across any distance, FaceTime puts you in the same room for a while. That's a gift your Mac hands you for free, any time you like.

CHAPTER 22

Contacts: Your Address Book

Contacts is your Mac's address book — a tidy place to keep the names, phone numbers, email addresses, and birthdays of everyone you know. Fill it in once, and every other program (Mail, Messages, FaceTime) can use it, so you type a name instead of a long number.

Adding someone to Contacts

1. Click the **Contacts** icon (a brown address-book card) in the Dock, or find it with Spotlight.
2. Click the **+** button near the bottom and choose **New Contact**.
3. Fill in the boxes — first and last name, phone number, email. You only need what you have; leave the rest blank.
4. Click **Done**. That person is now saved, and their name will pop up as a suggestion whenever you write to or call them.

Finding and editing a contact

- **To find someone:** type their name in the search box at the top of Contacts.
- **To change their details:** open their card and click **Edit**, make your changes, and click **Done**.
- **To call or write from here:** click the little label beside a phone number or email to start a FaceTime call or a new message.

GOOD TO KNOW

Your contacts follow you everywhere

If you use the same Apple ID on your iPhone and Mac, your contacts stay the same on both automatically — add Aunt Mary on the Mac and she appears on your phone too. That's iCloud quietly keeping everything in step, with nothing for you to do.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Everyone you know, a name away

A well-kept address book means you never hunt for a number again. Want to call your daughter? Type "Sarah." Email the doctor? Start the name and pick it. Contacts is the quiet backbone that makes staying in touch feel effortless.

CHAPTER 23

Searching the Web Well

Most time on the web starts with a search — asking the internet a question and getting a list of answers to explore. Doing it well is a small skill that pays off every single day. Let's sharpen it.

How to search

1. Click the address bar at the top of Safari.
2. Type your question in plain words — "how to remove a wine stain" or "library hours Ravenna Ohio" — and press **Return**.
3. A list of results appears. Click one that looks right to read it; use the back arrow to return to the list and try another.

Getting better answers

- **Be specific.** "Chicken soup recipe" gives a flood; "easy chicken soup recipe with egg noodles" gives you what you actually want.
- **Add your town** for local things: "pharmacy near Kent Ohio open Sunday."
- **Use plain questions.** You can type exactly as you'd ask a person — the search understands.
- **Judge the source.** For health, money, or official matters, favor known, trustworthy sites (a hospital, a .gov site, a well-known paper) over ones you've never heard of.

SCAM ALERT

The top result isn't always the real one

Sometimes the first result or two is a paid advertisement, marked small with "Sponsored" or "Ad." These aren't necessarily the official site you wanted — scammers sometimes buy ads that imitate a real company's "support" line. For anything important, like a company's phone number or login page, look for their genuine website rather than clicking the very first thing, and never trust a "support number" from an ad. Unsure? Call me.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Any question, answered in seconds

A good search turns the whole internet into the world's largest reference desk — recipes, repair tips, the meaning of a word, the year a film came out, how to get somewhere. Learn to ask it well and you'll rarely be stuck wondering about anything again.

CHAPTER 24

Video Calls Beyond FaceTime: Zoom & the Rest

FaceTime is lovely for Apple-to-Apple calls, but families, doctors, churches, and clubs often use other video-call services — **Zoom** most of all, and sometimes **Google Meet**, **Microsoft Teams**, or **Skype**. The good news: they all work the same way, and you usually don't need to set up anything in advance.

Joining a call someone invited you to

Almost always, joining is as simple as clicking a **link** they send you by email or message:

1. Find the invitation — an email or message with a link and often a time.
2. At the right time, click the **link**. Your Mac opens it.
3. It may ask to open or install the program (for Zoom) or just open in Safari (for Google Meet). Follow the simple prompt — clicking "Join from browser" is often the easiest.
4. Allow it to use your **camera and microphone** when asked, so they can see and hear you.
5. You're in! Click **Join** or **Join with Video**, and there's everyone.

The buttons you'll see on a call

Button	What it does
Microphone (mute)	Click to mute/unmute yourself. A red line through it means you're muted — others can't hear you.
Camera (video)	Turn your picture on or off. A red line means others can't see you.
Leave / End	The red button to hang up when the call is over.
Chat	A speech-bubble to type messages to the group during the call.

TIP

If they can't hear you, check the mute button first

The number-one hiccup on video calls is a muted microphone — everyone's done it. If people say they can't hear you, look for the microphone button and make sure it *doesn't* have a red line through it. Second most common: the volume is down, or the sound's going to the wrong speakers. Both are quick fixes, and nothing to be embarrassed about.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Join the whole world's gatherings

Video calls beyond FaceTime open the door to telehealth appointments with the doctor, a grandchild's school event, a book club, a church service, or a family reunion across the country. One click on a link and you're there — no travel, no fuss, right from your chair.

PART 4

Everyday Tasks & Favorite Programs

Your photos, writing and notes, printing, the calendar and reminders, maps, music and TV, and finding new programs in the App Store.

CHAPTER 25

Photos: Your Whole Library, Organized

The **Photos** app gathers every picture and video you take or save into one tidy, searchable place — and keeps them safe. If you have an iPhone too, the photos you snap there appear on your Mac on their own. The icon is a colorful pinwheel flower.

Finding your way around Photos

- **Library** — every photo, newest at the bottom. Scroll to wander back through time.
- **Years, Months, Days** — buttons that group your pictures by when they were taken, so you can jump to "last Christmas" without endless scrolling.
- **Albums** — collections you make yourself ("Grandkids," "Garden"), down the left side.
- **People, Places** — Photos can gather all the pictures of one person, or show them on a map by where they were taken. Rather clever, and no work on your part.

Looking at, and sharing, a photo

1. Double-click any photo to see it large. Use the arrow keys to move to the next or previous.
2. To send it to someone, click the **Share** button (a square with an arrow pointing up) and choose **Mail**, **Messages**, or another option.
3. To make small fixes — straighten, brighten, or crop — click **Edit** at the top-right. Don't worry: click **Revert to Original** any time to undo everything. You truly can't ruin the photo.

GOOD TO KNOW

Your photos, safe even if the Mac isn't

If iCloud Photos is on, every picture is also kept safely in the cloud (secure storage online). That means a spilled cup of coffee on the laptop can't take your memories with it — they're waiting safely online and on your other Apple devices. We'll cover turning this on in the safety part.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A lifetime of memories, always at hand

No more shoeboxes of prints or "which drawer is that photo in?" Every picture you've taken, searchable by person, place, or date, ready to enjoy or share in seconds. Photos turns your Mac into the family album that organizes itself.

CHAPTER 26

Writing: TextEdit, Notes & Pages

Whether you want to jot a quick list or write a proper letter, the Mac has you covered. There are three easy tools, and you can pick whichever fits the job.

Notes — for quick jottings

The **Notes** app (a yellow notepad icon) is perfect for anything you'd scribble on a sticky note: a shopping list, a phone number, things to remember. Open it, click the new-note button (a square with a pencil), and type. It saves itself automatically — there's nothing to remember. Your notes sync to your iPhone too, so your grocery list is in your pocket at the store.

Pages — for letters and documents

Pages (an orange icon with a pen) is Apple's free word processor — the tool for writing a real letter, a flyer, or anything you want to look nice and print. It may already be installed; if not, it's free from the App Store.

1. Open **Pages** and choose **Blank** for a plain page (or pick a ready-made template like "Letter").
2. Type your document. Use the toolbar at the top to make text **bold**, change its size, or center it.
3. Save it: click **File** → **Save**, give it a clear name, choose Documents, and click **Save**.
4. Print it when ready: **File** → **Print** (the next chapter walks through printing).

GOOD TO KNOW

TextEdit: the plainest option of all

There's also a bare-bones writing app called **TextEdit**, tucked in your Applications, for when you just want a simple typing window with no frills. It's perfectly good for a quick note or draft. Use whichever of the three feels easiest — there's no wrong choice.

TIP

The Mac fixes typos and spelling as you go

As you type, the Mac quietly underlines misspelled words in red. Right-click a red-underlined word to see suggested corrections and click the right one. It's like having a patient proofreader looking over your shoulder — one you can ignore whenever you like.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Put your words on the page, beautifully

From a grocery list to a heartfelt letter, these tools let you write comfortably on a big screen, fix mistakes without a bottle of correction fluid, and print or email the result. Your thoughts, made neat and shareable.

CHAPTER 27

Printing from Your Mac

Printing on a Mac is refreshingly simple once your printer is set up. Most modern printers connect over Wi-Fi, so you can print from your chair with no cable at all.

Setting up a printer (once)

1. Make sure the printer is turned on and connected to the *same* Wi-Fi as your Mac.
2. Click the **Apple logo** → **System Settings**, then click **Printers & Scanners** in the list.
3. Click **Add Printer, Scanner, or Fax…** Your printer should appear in the list — click it, then click **Add**.
4. That's it. The Mac fetches what it needs and your printer is ready for good.

Printing a document or photo

1. With the thing you want to print open, click **File** in the menu bar, then **Print** (or press Command-P).
2. A window appears. Check the **printer** name is yours, and choose how many **copies** you'd like.
3. Click **Print**. Your pages appear in the tray.

TIP

If the printer won't print

The usual culprits, in order: is it turned on, does it have paper and ink, and is it on the same Wi-Fi as the Mac? Turning the printer off and on again clears most hiccups. Printers can be the most stubborn gadget in the house — if yours is giving you grief, it's a very common thing to call me about, and usually a quick fix.

GOOD TO KNOW

Saving as a PDF instead of printing

In that same Print window there's a **PDF** button. A PDF is simply an electronic copy of a page that looks exactly like the printout but lives as a file — handy for keeping a receipt or emailing a form without wasting paper. Click **PDF** → **Save as PDF** to make one.

CHAPTER 28

Calendar & Reminders

Two gentle helpers keep your days in order: **Calendar** for appointments and events, and **Reminders** for to-dos and don't-forgets. Both will nudge you at the right moment so nothing slips through.

Calendar — your appointments at a glance

1. Open the **Calendar** app (its icon shows today's date).
2. Choose **Day**, **Week**, **Month**, or **Year** at the top to see your time the way you like.
3. To add an event, double-click the day (and time), type what it is ("Dentist"), and set the time. Press Return.
4. Click an event to edit it, add a location, or set an **alert** that reminds you beforehand.

Reminders — your to-do list that nudges you

1. Open the **Reminders** app.
2. Click a blank line and type a task ("Call the pharmacy").
3. Point at it and click the little **i** to add a date and time — the Mac will remind you then, even on your iPhone.
4. When it's done, click the circle beside it to check it off. Satisfying!

TIP

Let Siri make the appointment for you

You can simply *say* "Remind me to take my pills at 8 tonight" or "Add lunch with Carol on Friday at noon" and the Mac does it for you. We'll meet Siri properly in a later chapter, but know that the calendar and reminders listen to plain speech.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Nothing important forgotten again

Appointments, birthdays, medications, the gas bill — written down once and quietly remembered for you, with a nudge at just the right time. That's a weight off the mind, and it works across your Mac, iPhone, and iPad all at once.

CHAPTER 29

Maps: Directions & Places

The **Maps** app is a whole road atlas and travel guide in one. Look up any address, get turn-by-turn directions, find the nearest pharmacy or restaurant, and even peek at a place before you go. The icon looks like a little folded map with a road.

Looking up a place or getting directions

1. Open **Maps** and click in the search box.
2. Type an address, a business name ("Kent library"), or a kind of place ("gas station near me").
3. Click the result you want. A card appears with its address, phone, and hours.
4. Click **Directions**, confirm your starting point, and Maps lays out the route with the time and distance. You can send the directions to your iPhone for the car.

GOOD TO KNOW

Maps is a planner; your phone is the navigator

On the Mac, Maps is wonderful for *planning* — finding a place, checking the route, reading reviews before you leave home. For actual turn-by-turn directions while driving, you'll want them spoken aloud from your phone. Click **Share** → ***(your iPhone)*** to send the trip over, or just ask your phone for it directly.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Never lost, never guessing

Whether it's a new doctor's office across town or a trip to see family three states away, Maps shows you exactly how to get there, how long it'll take, and what's nearby. A little confidence before every outing, right from your desk.

CHAPTER 30

Music, TV & Podcasts

Your Mac is a fine entertainment center. Three apps cover most of it: **Music** for songs, **TV** for movies and shows, and **Podcasts** for free talk-radio-style programs on every subject under the sun.

Music

The **Music** app plays any songs you own, and — if you subscribe to Apple Music — gives you a jukebox of practically every song ever recorded. You can search for a song, artist, or era, and play it through the Mac's speakers or your headphones. Even without a subscription, there's free radio to explore.

TV, and Podcasts

- **TV** — rent or buy movies and shows, and watch anything you've purchased. Many streaming services also have their own apps or websites; we cover cord-cutting and streaming thoroughly in a separate manual.
- **Podcasts** — free audio programs on history, gardening, faith, news, true crime, you name it. Search a topic, click **Follow** on one you like, and new episodes arrive on their own. A lovely companion for chores or a quiet afternoon.

TIP

Control playback without hunting

While something is playing, the controls (play, pause, skip) appear in **Control Center** up in the menu bar — click the little "now playing" area. Your keyboard may also have play/pause and volume keys along the top row. No need to switch back to the app just to pause.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A world of listening and watching

Rediscover the music of your youth, follow a podcast that feels like a good conversation, or settle in with a film — all from the same machine. Entertainment on your schedule, at your volume, with no commercials to shout at you.

CHAPTER 31

Your Apple ID & the App Store

Two things tie your whole Apple world together: your **Apple ID**, which is your personal account with Apple, and the **App Store**, the one safe place to get new programs. Let's demystify both.

What an Apple ID is

Your **Apple ID** is simply your account with Apple — an email address and password that identify you across all your Apple devices. It's what keeps your photos, contacts, and messages in step between your Mac and iPhone, and it's how you download apps and buy things from Apple. You almost certainly set one up when you first got an Apple device. You have just one, and you use it everywhere.

STAY SAFE

Your Apple ID password is precious — protect it

Because your Apple ID guards your photos, backups, and purchases, it's one of the most important passwords you have. Never share it, and be deeply suspicious of any email, text, or call claiming to be "Apple" asking you to "verify" or "confirm" it — Apple does not do that. Turn on two-factor authentication (an extra safety step we cover in the safety part) and you'll be well protected. Unsure? Call me.

Getting new programs from the App Store

1. Click the **App Store** icon (a blue circle with an A made of brushes) in the Dock.
2. Search for what you want in the box at the top-left, or browse the categories.
3. Click an app to read about it. Free apps show a **Get** button; paid ones show a price.
4. Click **Get** (or the price), confirm with Touch ID or your Apple ID password, and it installs itself. Find it afterward with Spotlight or in your Applications.

GOOD TO KNOW

The App Store is the safe place to get programs

Here's a golden rule for staying out of trouble: **get your programs from the App Store** whenever you can. Apple checks everything there, so you won't accidentally install something harmful. Be wary of websites that urge you to "download" or "install" something to fix a problem — especially pop-ups claiming your Mac has a virus. Those are almost always tricks. When in doubt, don't, and call me.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

One account, everything in sync; one store, safely stocked

Your Apple ID means you set things up once and they simply work everywhere — the same photos, contacts, and messages on every device. And the App Store means adding a new ability to your Mac is as safe and easy as picking a book off a trusted shelf.

CHAPTER 32

Preview: PDFs, Photos & Signing Documents

Preview is a quiet workhorse that opens almost any picture or **PDF** (an electronic document that looks just like a printed page). It does far more than just show them — it can fill in forms, sign documents, and tidy photos, all without any extra program to buy.

Opening and reading a PDF

Double-click any PDF — a bank statement, a form, a manual — and it opens in Preview. Scroll with two fingers to read on; use the sidebar to jump between pages; and press Command and **+** to make the text bigger if it's small.

Filling in and signing a form

This one feels like magic the first time. Many PDFs — medical forms, applications — can be filled in and signed right on the Mac, with no printer at all:

1. Open the PDF in Preview. Click a blank field and type — your text appears right on the form.
2. To sign, click the **Markup** button (a pen tip in a circle), then the **Signature** button.
3. The first time, you'll create your signature — either sign with your finger on the trackpad, or hold a signature you wrote on white paper up to the Mac's camera. The Mac saves it for next time.
4. Click to drop your signature onto the form, drag it into place, and save. Email it back, no printing or scanning needed.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Handle paperwork without the paper

Preview turns a trip to the printer, the pen, and the scanner into a few clicks at your desk. Fill in the form, sign it, send it back — all electronically, all in a couple of minutes. For anyone who dreads paperwork, it's a small everyday marvel.

TIP

Combine or rotate pages in Preview too

Preview can also rotate a sideways page (Tools menu), delete a page you don't want, or combine several PDFs into one by dragging them together in the sidebar. If you ever need to do that and aren't sure how, it's a two-minute job we can do together on a call.

CHAPTER 33

Notes in Depth: Lists, Scanning & More

We met Notes briefly earlier; it's worth a proper look, because it quietly does far more than hold a bit of text. For many people it becomes the most-used app on the Mac.

Checklists you can tick off

In a note, click the checklist button (a circle with a tick) to start a to-do or shopping list. Type each item and press Return for the next. Tap the circle beside an item to check it off. Because Notes syncs to your iPhone, your list is in your pocket at the store, and ticking it off there updates it on the Mac too.

Organizing with folders

Down the left side, Notes keeps **folders** — "Recipes," "Medical," "Travel" — so your jottings don't become one long jumble. Click **New Folder** at the bottom, name it, and drag notes into it. A search box at the top finds any note in a flash.

Scanning a document with your phone's camera

Here's a delightful trick if you also have an iPhone: in a note, you can scan a paper document — a receipt, a warranty, a letter — using the phone's camera, and it lands right in the note on your Mac as a tidy image. Right-click in a note, choose **Insert from iPhone** → **Scan Documents**, and follow the prompt on your phone. A paperless filing cabinet, built from things you'd otherwise lose.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

One place for all life's little scraps

Grocery lists, the Wi-Fi password, a recipe, the model number of the furnace, a scanned receipt — Notes gathers all of life's loose scraps into one searchable, synced place you can reach from any of your devices. Simple, free, and genuinely one of the handiest things the Mac offers.

CHAPTER 34

The Small Helpers: Weather, Clock, Calculator & Stocks

A handful of small, built-in apps quietly make the day easier. None needs much explaining, but together they replace a shelf of little gadgets.

Weather

The **Weather** app shows the forecast for your town and anywhere else you like — the hour-by-hour, the ten-day outlook, and warnings of storms. Add a city by searching its name. A glance before you plan the day or a trip.

Clock: alarms, timers & a world clock

- **Timer** — a countdown for the oven, the laundry, or a nap. Set the minutes and click start.
- **Alarm** — a wake-up or a reminder at a set time.
- **World Clock** — see the time where family lives far away, so you call at a kind hour.
- **Stopwatch** — time anything, from a walk to a phone-hold.

Calculator, and Stocks

- **Calculator** — a full calculator on screen; click the buttons or type the numbers. It can even convert measurements and currencies.
- **Stocks** — if you follow the markets, add the companies you care about and see how they're doing at a glance, with the day's financial news below.

TIP

Siri does all of these by voice, too

You needn't even open these. Just say "Set a timer for 10 minutes," "What's the weather tomorrow?", "What's 15 percent of 80?", or "What time is it in London?" and Siri answers at once. The little apps are there when you want to look; Siri's there when you'd rather just ask.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A drawer full of handy gadgets, built in

A kitchen timer, an alarm clock, a calculator, a weather station, a world clock — all the little tools of daily life, gathered into the one machine and always a click or a word away. Small things, but they add up to a day that runs a touch more smoothly.

CHAPTER 35

Shopping & Banking Online, Safely

Two of the most useful things you can do on a Mac — shop and bank from your chair — are also the two where a little care pays off most. Done sensibly, both are safe and a great convenience. Here's how to do them with confidence.

Banking online

Your bank has a website (and often an app) where you can check your balance, pay bills, and move money — no trip to the branch. The keys to doing it safely:

- **Reach your bank the right way.** Type the bank's address yourself, or use a bookmark *you* saved — never a link from an email or text. This one habit defeats most bank scams.
- **Check the address bar** shows your real bank's address, with the little padlock, before you sign in.
- **Use a strong, unique password** and turn on two-factor authentication (covered in the safety part). Your bank login deserves your very best protection.
- **Sign out when you're done**, especially if others use the Mac.

Shopping online

- **Stick to shops you know** or that have a solid reputation. If a deal seems far too good to be true, it usually is.
- **Look for the padlock** and a sensible web address before entering a card number.
- **Consider Apple Pay** where it's offered — it lets you pay without typing your card number into the site at all, which is both quicker and safer.
- **Keep an eye on your statements** now and then, so an odd charge gets spotted early.

SCAM ALERT

The fake "order problem" and "delivery" messages

A very common trick is an email or text claiming there's a problem with an order, a package, or a payment, with a link to "fix" it. Don't click. If you're unsure whether a real order has a problem, go to that shop's website yourself and check your account. Delivery companies and shops don't need you to "confirm" card details by clicking a link. When in doubt, that's a perfect moment to call me.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

The bank and the shops, open at your convenience

No more driving to the branch before it closes or the shop before it sells out. Banking and shopping from your chair, any hour, done safely, gives back time and effort — especially on a cold day or a busy week. A few sensible habits, and the whole convenience is yours with peace of mind.

CHAPTER 36

Reading: News, Books & Magazines

Your Mac is a library and a newsstand rolled into one. Whether you like to keep up with the headlines, settle in with a novel, or flip through a magazine, there's a comfortable, eye-friendly way to do it.

News

The **News** app gathers stories from many sources into one place, shaped around the topics you care about. Open it, and tell it what interests you — local news, gardening, sports, your favorite paper — and it keeps a fresh front page ready. You can make the text as large as you like, so reading is never a strain.

Books

The **Books** app (an orange book icon) is a whole bookshop and library on your Mac. Search for a title or author, read a free sample, and buy if you like it. Best of all, you set the text size, the font, and the page color to whatever's kindest to your eyes — and the Mac can even read a book *aloud* to you, a joy for tired eyes or a long afternoon. Many classic books are free.

GOOD TO KNOW

Your library card works here too

You don't have to buy every book. Most public libraries — very likely yours in Portage County — lend electronic books free through apps like **Libby**, which you can add from the App Store and sign in to with your library card. The same book you'd borrow from the shelf, delivered to your Mac at no cost. Ask your librarian, or ask me, and we'll get you set up.

Making reading comfortable

- **Bigger text:** every reading app lets you enlarge the words — look for an "AA" button or a text-size setting.
- **Gentler colors:** a cream or dark background is easier on the eyes than stark white for long reading. Try the "theme" or "appearance" options.
- **Read aloud:** let the Mac narrate, using the Spoken Content feature from the accessibility chapter, and rest your eyes while you listen.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A whole newsstand and library, sized for your eyes

No more squinting at small print or driving out for the paper. The news you care about and the books you love, in text as large and as gentle as you like, delivered to your chair — and often read aloud if you prefer to listen. Reading, made a pleasure again.

PART 5

Settings & Making It Yours

System Settings explained, making the screen and text easier on the eyes and ears, sound, the keyboard, and talking to Siri.

CHAPTER 37

System Settings: The Control Room

System Settings is where you adjust how your whole Mac behaves — the wallpaper, the sound, your Wi-Fi, how big the text is, and hundreds of other things. (On older Macs it was called "System Preferences" — same idea, newer name.) Don't let the long list scare you; you'll only ever use a handful of these, and you can't hurt anything by looking.

Opening System Settings

Click the **Apple logo** at the top-left, then **System Settings**. (Its icon is a grey gear, and it's usually in the Dock too.) A window opens with a long list down the left side and the chosen settings on the right.

Finding what you need

The left-hand list is organized a lot like an iPhone's settings. Rather than scrolling the whole thing, use the **search box** at the very top-left: type a word like "brightness" or "sound" or "printer" and it jumps you straight to the right spot. This is the easy way, every time.

Here are the sections you're most likely to visit:

Section	What you adjust there
Wi-Fi	Join or switch internet networks.
Bluetooth	Connect wireless gadgets.
Wallpaper	Change your desktop background picture.
Displays	Make everything on screen larger, adjust brightness.
Sound	Set the volume and alert sounds.
Accessibility	Make the Mac easier to see, hear, and use.
Notifications	Choose which programs may interrupt you.
Printers & Scanners	Add or manage a printer.
General → Software Update	Keep the Mac up to date.

TIP

You truly can't break anything in here

People tiptoe around Settings as if one wrong click will wreck the Mac. It won't. Nearly every setting is a simple on/off switch or a slider you can move right back. If you ever change something and don't like it, just change it back. Explore with a calm mind — curiosity is how you learn where things live.

GOOD TO KNOW

Switches, sliders, and checkmarks

Most settings are one of three kinds. A **switch** slides left (off) or right (on, and turns green or blue). A **slider** you drag along a line, for things like volume or brightness. A **checkbox** or dot you click to choose one option from a few. Once you recognize these three, every settings screen on the Mac makes sense.

CHAPTER 38

Making the Screen Easier to See

If text feels small or the screen is hard on your eyes, the Mac has generous tools to help. There's no reason to squint — let's make it comfortable.

Making everything bigger

1. Open **System Settings** and click **Displays**.
2. You'll see a row of preview screens labeled from "Larger Text" to "More Space." Click **Larger Text** (toward the left) to make everything on screen bigger and easier to read.
3. The change happens instantly. Try each option and keep whichever is kindest to your eyes.

Brightness, and Dark Mode

- **Brightness:** in **Displays**, drag the brightness slider — brighter in a sunny room, dimmer in the evening. (Control Center has this slider too.)
- **Dark Mode:** under **Appearance** you can switch the whole Mac to a dark background with light text, which some find easier at night. Try **Light**, **Dark**, and **Auto** (which changes with the time of day) and see what suits you.
- **Night Shift:** warms the screen's colors in the evening to be gentler on the eyes before bed — found under Displays.

Zoom: magnify any part of the screen

For moments when you need a closer look — small print on a web page, a detail in a photo — the Mac can magnify part of the screen like a strong reading glass:

1. Open **System Settings** → **Accessibility** → **Zoom**.
2. Turn on **Use scroll gesture with modifier keys to zoom**.
3. Now hold the **Control** key and slide two fingers up on the trackpad (or scroll the mouse) to zoom in; slide down to zoom back out. Magnification wherever you point.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A screen that fits your eyes

Bigger text, the right brightness, a quick magnifier — these aren't "special needs," they're just comfort. A screen you can read without straining means longer, happier time on the Mac and far less fatigue. Set it up to suit *you*; that's the whole point.

CHAPTER 39

Making It Easier to Hear & Use

The **Accessibility** settings are a treasure chest of helpful tools — for hearing, for hands that aren't as steady as they were, and for anyone who'd simply like the Mac to meet them halfway. Everyone benefits from a look through here.

For hearing

- **Volume:** the simplest fix — raise it in Control Center or with the keyboard's volume keys.
- **Mono audio:** under **Accessibility** → **Audio**, this sends the same sound to both sides, helpful if you hear better in one ear.
- **Hearing aids:** many modern hearing aids connect straight to the Mac over Bluetooth, so sound plays right into them. Look under **Accessibility** → **Hearing Devices**.
- **Captions:** the Mac can show captions (words on screen) for videos and even live speech — look under **Accessibility** → **Live Captions**.

For easier handling

- **Pointer size:** under **Accessibility** → **Display** → **Pointer**, make the arrow bigger and easier to spot, or set it to shake-to-find when you lose it.
- **Slower double-click:** if double-clicking is tricky, you can give yourself more time between the two clicks under **Accessibility** → **Pointer Control**.
- **Sticky Keys:** lets you press keyboard shortcuts one key at a time instead of holding several at once — kinder to stiff fingers.

For reading aloud

The Mac can **read text out loud** to you — a web article, an email, a document. Under **Accessibility** → **Spoken Content**, turn on **Speak Selection**. Then select some text and press the keys it shows you, and the Mac reads it aloud in a natural voice. A gift for tired eyes.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

The Mac meets you where you are

Technology should bend to fit you, never the other way around. Whether it's louder sound, a bigger pointer, captions, or a voice reading the news aloud, these tools quietly remove the friction so the Mac stays a pleasure to use for years to come. Take a leisurely look through Accessibility — you'll likely find two or three things that make your day easier.

CHAPTER 40

The Keyboard & Typing Helps

Typing gets comfortable faster than you'd think. Let's name the keys that matter and the handful of tricks that save real time — including how to type without typing at all.

The keys worth knowing

Key	What it does
Return (or Enter)	Starts a new line, or confirms/sends something.
Delete	Rubs out the character just before the cursor (backspace).
Shift	Hold it to type a capital letter or the symbol on the top of a key.
Space bar	The long bar — makes a space between words.
Command (⌘)	The key beside the space bar, used for shortcuts like Command-C to copy.
Escape (esc)	Top-left — backs out of things, cancels, closes a menu.
Arrow keys	Move the cursor up, down, left, right without the mouse.

The four shortcuts worth memorizing

You can do everything with menus, but these four keyboard moves are so useful they're worth committing to memory. Hold **Command** and tap the letter:

- **Command-C** — **Copy** whatever you've selected.
- **Command-V** — **Paste** it somewhere else.
- **Command-Z** — **Undo** your last action (a lifesaver — it takes back mistakes).
- **Command-S** — **Save** your work.

Dictation: speak instead of type

If typing is slow going, let the Mac take dictation. Wherever you can type, press the **microphone key** on the keyboard (or the one in the row of function keys), or turn it on under **System Settings** → **Keyboard** → **Dictation**. Then just talk — your words appear on the screen. Say "period" or "comma" for punctuation. It's surprisingly good, and a joy for longer emails.

TIP

Copy and paste is the most useful trick of all

Once copy (Command-C) and paste (Command-V) are in your fingers, so much gets easier: copying an address into Maps, a confirmation number into a form, a paragraph from one letter to another. Select the thing first (drag across it so it highlights), copy, click where it should go, paste. Practice it a few times and you'll use it every day.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Let your words flow, your way

Whether you type with two fingers, ten, or prefer to just speak, the Mac keeps up. Undo forgives every mistake, copy-and-paste saves endless retyping, and dictation means a long message is as easy as talking to a friend. The keyboard bends to suit you.

CHAPTER 41

Siri: Your Spoken Helper

Siri is the Mac's voice assistant — a helper you talk to in plain words. Ask a question, set a reminder, check the weather, open a program, or send a message, all by speaking. It's often the fastest way to get something done, and there's nothing to learn but talking.

Turning Siri on and using it

1. Open **System Settings** → **Apple Intelligence & Siri** (or just "Siri") and turn Siri on if it isn't already. You can choose to summon Siri by voice ("Hey Siri" or just "Siri") or by clicking its icon.
2. To ask something, say **"Siri"** out loud (if you enabled that), or click the Siri icon in the menu bar.
3. Speak naturally: "What's the weather tomorrow?" or "Remind me to call Dan at 3" or "Open Mail."
4. Siri answers aloud and on screen, and does the task if there is one.

Handy things to ask Siri

- "What's the weather this weekend?"
- "Set a timer for 20 minutes." (For the oven, the laundry.)
- "Remind me to take my medicine at 8 tonight."
- "How do you spell 'necessary'?"
- "What's 18 percent of 64?"
- "Call my daughter." (If she's in your Contacts.)
- "Open Safari" or "Open Photos."

GOOD TO KNOW

Siri and "Apple Intelligence"

On newer Macs you may see **Apple Intelligence** — a set of smarter helpers for writing, summarizing long emails, and tidying photos. It works alongside Siri. You don't need it to use your Mac well, and it's entirely optional. If it interests you, we can turn it on and explore it together some time.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Just ask, and it's done

Siri turns a string of clicks into a simple sentence. No menus, no hunting — you say what you want and the Mac handles it. For quick questions, reminders, and little tasks, it's often the gentlest way of all, and it never minds being asked twice.

CHAPTER 42

Personalizing: Wallpaper, Screen Saver & the Lock Screen

A Mac you've made your own is a nicer place to spend time. Changing the background picture and a few touches takes minutes, can't hurt a thing, and makes the machine feel like yours. Let's have some fun.

Changing the desktop background

1. Open **System Settings** and click **Wallpaper**.
2. Choose from Apple's handsome built-in pictures, or scroll to **Photos** to use one of your own — the grandkids, the garden, a favorite view.
3. Click a picture and it appears at once. Don't like it? Pick another. There's no wrong choice and nothing to save.

The screen saver

A **screen saver** is the moving picture that appears when the Mac sits idle for a while — drifting landscapes, a slideshow of your photos. Set it up under **System Settings** → **Screen Saver**. Choosing your own photos here turns an idle Mac into a lovely ever-changing family album on the desk.

The Lock Screen

The **Lock Screen** is what you see before you log in — the clock and your background. You can give it its own picture under **System Settings** → **Lock Screen**, and set how soon the Mac asks for your password after it sleeps (a shorter time is safer if you're ever away from home with a laptop).

> **TIP**
>
> **Make the whole look match your eyes and taste**
>
> While you're personalizing, remember the comfort settings from the earlier chapters: a larger text size, Dark Mode if you prefer it, a bigger pointer. "Making it yours" isn't just prettiness — it's setting the Mac up to be easy and pleasant for *you* to use, which is the whole point.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A machine that feels like home

A background photo you love, a slideshow of good memories when it rests, text sized for your eyes — these small touches turn an anonymous gadget into *your* Mac. You'll find you reach for it more happily, and that's exactly as it should be.

CHAPTER 43

Widgets: Handy Panels at a Glance

A **widget** is a small panel that shows useful information at a glance and updates on its own — the weather, your next appointment, the time around the world, a photo that changes through the day. You can keep them in Notification Center, or set them right on your desktop.

Seeing your widgets

Click the **clock** at the top-right of the menu bar to slide out Notification Center; your widgets sit below your notifications. Many people never need more than this.

Putting widgets on the desktop

1. Right-click an empty spot on the desktop and choose **Edit Widgets**.
2. A gallery appears. Browse the kinds — Weather, Calendar, Clock, Reminders, Photos, and more.
3. Click or drag the ones you want onto the desktop. Drag them to arrange them.
4. Click **Done**. Your chosen panels now sit quietly on your desktop, always up to date.

GOOD TO KNOW

Widgets are a glance, not a chore

The whole idea of a widget is that you never have to open an app just to check one little thing. The weather's right there; your next appointment's right there. If they ever feel like clutter, right-click and remove them — they're a convenience to use as much or as little as you like.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

The day's essentials, without lifting a finger

A glance at the desktop and you know the weather, what's next on the calendar, and the time where your family lives — no clicking, no opening, no searching. Widgets keep the information you care about quietly in view, so the Mac informs you without interrupting you.

PART 6

Staying Safe & Keeping Your Things

Strong passwords the easy way, the extra lock of two-factor, keeping the Mac updated, backing up with Time Machine and iCloud, and spotting the scams aimed at all of us.

CHAPTER 44

Passwords Made Simple

Passwords cause more worry than almost anything else about computers — and the good news is your Mac can take nearly the whole burden off your shoulders. You do not have to remember dozens of them, and you do not have to keep them on a slip of paper by the screen.

Why passwords matter

A password is the key to an account — your email, your bank, a shopping site. If someone learns it, they can get in and cause real trouble. So each important account should have its own *strong* password (long and not a real word), and no two should be the same. That sounds impossible to remember — which is exactly why the Mac remembers them for you.

The built-in Passwords app

Your Mac has a free app called **Passwords** (a key icon) that safely stores every password behind your one Mac login. When you sign in to a website in Safari, the Mac offers to save the password; later, it fills it in for you with a click. You remember one thing — your Mac password — and the Mac handles the rest.

1. Open the **Passwords** app (find it with Spotlight: Command-space, type "passwords").
2. Unlock it with Touch ID or your Mac password.
3. You'll see every saved login. Click one to view the password, copy it, or update it.
4. When a website asks you to sign in, Safari shows your saved login above the keyboard — click it and you're in, no typing.

Letting the Mac invent strong passwords

When you sign up for a new account, Safari offers to **create a strong password** for you — a long jumble no one could guess — and saves it automatically. Say yes. You'll never have to type or remember it; the Mac fills it in whenever you return. This single habit makes you dramatically safer with no effort at all.

STAY SAFE

The one rule that defeats most trouble

Use a *different* password for every important account, and let the Mac remember them. Why? Because if one site is ever broken into and a password leaks, crooks try that same password everywhere else. Different passwords mean one leak can't unlock your whole life. The Passwords app makes this effortless — which is the whole reason it exists.

GOOD TO KNOW

This topic has its own complete manual

Passwords and the extra lock called two-factor authentication are so important that we've written a whole separate manual on them, including dedicated apps like Bitwarden and 1Password for folks who want them. If this subject interests or worries you, ask for "Passwords & Password Managers" — it goes deeper than we can here.

CHAPTER 45

Two-Factor: The Extra Lock

Two-factor authentication — often shortened to "2FA" or "two-step verification" — is the single best thing you can do to protect an important account. The name is a mouthful, but the idea is simple and you've met it before at the bank.

What it is, in plain English

Normally you prove who you are with one thing: your password. Two-factor adds a *second* thing — a one-time code sent to your phone, or approved with a tap on a device you own. So even if a crook somehow learns your password, they still can't get in, because they don't have your phone in their hand. It's a deadbolt on top of the doorknob lock.

How it works day to day

1. You sign in to an important account with your password as usual.
2. The account sends a short code (often six numbers) to your phone by text, or pops up a "Was this you?" notice on your Apple device.
3. You type the code, or tap **Allow**. You're in.
4. It usually only asks on a new device or now and then — not every single time — so it's far less bother than it sounds.

STAY SAFE

Your Apple ID already uses this — keep it that way

Your Apple ID almost certainly has two-factor turned on, which is why you sometimes get a code or a "Sign in requested" notice. That's a *good* thing protecting your photos and backups — never turn it off. And remember: a real code is something *you* asked for by signing in. If a code arrives out of the blue, or someone phones asking you to read them a code, **do not share it** — that's a scam. Hang up and call me.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Peace of mind for your most important accounts

Turning on two-factor for your email and your bank means a stolen password alone can't hurt you. It's a few seconds now and then in exchange for locking the crooks out for good. Of all the safety steps in this book, this is the one I'd most want you to have.

CHAPTER 46

Keeping the Mac Updated

Apple regularly sends out free **updates** to macOS. These aren't just new features — most importantly, they patch up security holes that crooks try to sneak through. Keeping your Mac reasonably up to date is one of the simplest ways to stay safe.

Checking for and installing updates

1. Click the **Apple logo** → **System Settings**.
2. Click **General**, then **Software Update**.
3. Wait a moment while it checks. If it says you're up to date, you're all set.
4. If an update is offered, plug a laptop into power, then click **Update Now** and let it run. It may restart once or twice — that's normal. Don't close the lid or unplug it while it works.

TIP

Let it update itself — but on your schedule

In that same Software Update spot, click the little **i** or "Automatic Updates" and you can let the Mac download and install updates on its own, usually overnight. That way you're protected without having to remember. If you'd rather approve each one yourself, that's fine too — just check every few weeks.

HEADS UP

Don't update in the middle of something important

An update needs a little time and a restart, so don't start one five minutes before a video call or when you're about to print the boarding passes. Pick a quiet moment — a good time is last thing at night, plugged in, when you're done for the day. And never force the Mac off while it's updating; let it finish.

CHAPTER 47

Backups: Never Lose a Thing

A **backup** is a spare copy of everything on your Mac, kept somewhere safe, so that if the Mac is ever lost, stolen, or simply stops working, your photos, documents, and memories aren't lost with it. This is the insurance policy nobody thinks about until the day they desperately wish they had it. Let's make sure you have it.

Two kinds of safety net

- **iCloud** — keeps copies of your photos, contacts, documents, and more safely online, automatically, so they're there even if the Mac isn't. Great for the things you touch every day.
- **Time Machine** — makes a complete copy of your *whole* Mac onto an external drive (a small box you plug in), so you could restore everything — programs and all — after a disaster. The gold standard.

Setting up Time Machine (worth the small effort)

1. Buy an **external hard drive** — a small box that plugs into your Mac with a cable. Any name-brand one of a terabyte or more is fine. (Ask me if you'd like a specific recommendation.)
2. Plug it in. The Mac may ask if you want to use it with Time Machine — click **Use as Backup Disk**. If it doesn't ask, open **System Settings** → **General** → **Time Machine** and click **Add Backup Disk**.
3. That's it. Time Machine quietly copies your Mac in the background whenever the drive is connected. Leave it plugged in, or plug it in once a week — both work.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

The day something goes wrong, you'll be so glad

Drives fail, laptops get dropped, coffee spills, phones and bags get left on trains. With a backup, any of those becomes a bad afternoon instead of a lost lifetime of photos. Setting it up takes twenty minutes once; the peace of mind lasts for years. If you do one thing from this part of the book, let it be this.

TIP

Let me help you set up backups

Backups are the one area where a little hand-holding the first time pays off enormously. If you're not sure what drive to buy or how to turn it all on, call me — we'll get you protected properly in one short sitting, and then you never have to think about it again.

CHAPTER 48

iCloud: Your Stuff, Everywhere & Safe

iCloud is Apple's secure storage in the cloud (remember: "the cloud" just means "kept safely online"). It quietly keeps your important things backed up and in step across your Mac, iPhone, and iPad — so a photo you take on your phone appears on your Mac, and your contacts are the same everywhere. It's tied to your Apple ID.

Seeing what iCloud is keeping for you

1. Open **System Settings** and click your **name** at the very top of the left-hand list.
2. Click **iCloud**.
3. You'll see switches for Photos, iCloud Drive (your documents), Contacts, Calendars, and more. A switch that's on means that item is being kept safe and in sync.
4. Turning on **Photos** here is especially worthwhile — it keeps your pictures safe even if the Mac is lost.

A word about iCloud storage

Apple gives everyone a small amount of iCloud space free (5 gigabytes — a "gigabyte" is just a unit of storage). A lifetime of photos soon outgrows that, so you may be offered a larger plan for a few dollars a month (Apple calls it iCloud+). Whether to pay is entirely up to you; if your photos matter to you, it's usually money well spent. I can help you weigh it without any pressure.

GOOD TO KNOW

iCloud is not the same as a Time Machine backup

A gentle but important point: iCloud keeps your *files* safe and synced, but it isn't a full copy of your whole Mac the way Time Machine is. The two work beautifully together — iCloud for everyday syncing and photo safety, Time Machine for a complete restore after a disaster. Having both is belt *and* suspenders, and that's just right for things you can't replace.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

One life, every device, all in step

iCloud means you stop thinking about *which* device has the latest photo or phone number — they all do. And it means the little slab in your pocket and the Mac on your desk are really two windows onto the same, safely-kept life. Set it once; enjoy it forever.

CHAPTER 49

Spotting Scams & Staying Safe Online

This may be the most important chapter in the book. The Mac itself is very secure — the real danger online isn't a virus sneaking in, it's a clever human trying to *trick you* into handing over money or a password. These tricks are called **scams**, and once you know their playbook, you'll spot them a mile off.

The feeling to watch for: urgency

Almost every scam shares one ingredient: it tries to make you feel **rushed, frightened, or excited**, so you act before you think. "Your account will be closed!" "You've won!" "Your computer is infected — call this number now!" **That rush is the tell.** Real companies don't operate by panic. When you feel that jolt of urgency, that's your cue to slow down, not speed up.

The common scams, and what to do

The scam	What's really going on & what to do
The pop-up virus warning	A scary message fills the screen: "Your Mac is infected! Call Apple Support now!" with a phone number. It's a fake, every time. Apple never does this. Don't call. Just close the tab, or restart the Mac.
The "tech support" caller	Someone phones claiming to be from Apple, Microsoft, or your internet company, wanting to "fix" your computer or get "remote access." Hang up. Real companies don't cold-call you like this.
The urgent bank/account email	An email or text says there's a problem and you must "verify" your login by clicking a link. Don't click. Go to the company the way you normally would instead.
The grandchild in trouble	A call or message: a grandchild (or someone claiming to help them) needs money wired urgently, and begs you not to tell anyone. Hang up and call your family directly to check. It's almost always a cruel fake.
The gift-card payment	Anyone — a "company," the "IRS," a "love interest" — who asks to be paid in gift cards is a scammer, full stop. No real business is ever paid that way.

SCAM ALERT

When in doubt, stop and call me — for free

Here is my standing promise, and I mean it: if a call, email, text, or pop-up ever makes you uneasy — about money, a password, your Apple ID, your bank, anything — **stop and call me before you do a single thing** at **(330) 200-8042**. I will never charge you, and I will never think less of you, for a "is this a scam?" question. Those calls are exactly what I'm here for, and they've saved folks a great deal of money and heartache. Trust the little voice that says "something's not right."

STAY SAFE

A few habits that keep you safe

Never give a password, a code, or a card number to someone who contacted *you*. Never let a stranger "remote into" your Mac. Get programs only from the App Store. Don't click links in unexpected emails. And remember — it is always, always okay to hang up, close the window, and walk away. A real, honest company will understand completely.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Confidence, not fear

The goal here isn't to make you nervous — it's the opposite. Once you know the handful of tricks crooks use, the fear lifts, because you can see them coming. You get to enjoy everything your Mac offers, calmly and safely, knowing you've got a sensible plan and a friend on the phone whenever you want a second opinion.

CHAPTER 50

Find My: Locating a Lost Mac or iPhone

Find My is Apple's feature for finding a lost device — a Mac left on a train, an iPhone slipped down the sofa, even tagged keys. It's quietly working in the background already if you're signed in to iCloud, and knowing it's there is a real comfort.

What it can do

- **Show where a device is** on a map — your own Mac, iPhone, iPad, or AirPods.
- **Play a sound** on a device nearby, to find it down the back of a cushion.
- **Mark it as lost**, which locks it and shows a message with your phone number for an honest finder.
- **Erase it from afar** as a last resort, so a thief can't reach your information.

Using Find My

1. Open the **Find My** app on your Mac (find it with Spotlight), or from any web browser go to **iCloud.com** and sign in.
2. Click **Devices** to see all your Apple devices on a map.
3. Click one, then choose **Play Sound**, **Mark As Lost**, or **Directions** as needed.

TIP

The best time to check Find My is before you need it

Take two minutes now, while nothing is lost, to open Find My and make sure your devices appear. That way, on the day something does go missing, you already know the tool works and where to look. A little preparation turns a panic into a quick glance at a map.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Peace of mind for the things you carry

A misplaced phone or a laptop left behind is a stomach-drop moment. Find My turns it into a solvable problem: see it on a map, make it chirp, lock it, or wipe it. Your devices — and the private information on them — stay under your control even when they're out of your hands.

CHAPTER 51

Privacy: Who Can See What

Your Mac gives you clear control over your private information — which programs may use the camera, the microphone, or your location, and what gets shared. You don't need to fuss over every setting, but it's good to know where the controls live and to glance at them now and then.

The privacy controls

Open **System Settings** → **Privacy & Security**. Here you'll find a tidy list:

Setting	What it controls
Location Services	Which apps may know where you are (Maps needs it; most don't).
Camera & Microphone	Which apps may use the camera or mic. A green or orange dot near the menu bar lights up whenever either is in use, so you always know.
Contacts, Photos, Calendars	Which apps may peek at your contacts, pictures, or schedule.
Analytics	Whether to share anonymous usage data with Apple (entirely optional).

When a program first wants to use your camera, location, or contacts, the Mac *asks your permission* with a pop-up. You're always in charge — say no to anything that doesn't obviously need it, and you can change your mind here any time.

GOOD TO KNOW

That little green dot is your friend

Whenever your camera is in use, a small **green dot** appears up near the menu bar; an **orange dot** means the microphone is on. If you ever see one when you're not on a call or recording, that's worth a look — though usually it's just a program you opened. It's Apple's quiet way of making sure nothing watches or listens without your knowing.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Your private life stays private

You decide what your Mac shares and what it keeps to itself — no program can quietly use your camera, your whereabouts, or your photos without asking first. That control, plus the little dots that show when the camera or mic is live, means privacy isn't something you have to worry about; it's something the Mac hands you by default.

PART 7

Keeping It Running Smoothly

The everyday fixes that solve most problems, handling a frozen program, freeing up space, battery care for laptops, and connecting the gadgets around you.

CHAPTER 52

When Something Goes Wrong: First Aid

Every computer has an off day now and then — a program freezes, the internet drops, something acts strangely. The wonderful news is that a small handful of simple moves fix the vast majority of problems. Keep this chapter handy; it's the one you'll return to.

The golden rule: restart first

Before anything else, try turning the Mac fully off and on again: **Apple logo** → **Restart**. This clears up an astonishing number of glitches, and it never deletes your files. If you remember only one fix, remember this one. Nine problems in ten simply disappear after a restart.

A frozen program (the "spinning wheel")

Sometimes one program stops responding and you see a little spinning colored wheel instead of the arrow. The rest of the Mac is usually fine — you just need to close that one stuck program:

1. Click the **Apple logo** at the top-left and choose **Force Quit…** (or press Command, Option, and Escape together).
2. A small window lists your open programs. Click the one that's stuck (it may say "not responding").
3. Click **Force Quit**, then confirm. The stuck program closes.
4. Open it again as normal. You may lose unsaved changes in that one program, but nothing else is harmed.

A quick checklist for common troubles

If this happens…	…try this
The whole Mac is slow	Restart it. Close programs you're not using (quit them, don't just close the window). Check storage isn't full (next chapter).
A program is frozen	Force Quit that program (above), then reopen it.
The internet isn't working	Restart your router (unplug one minute, plug back in). Check Wi-Fi is on in Control Center.
The screen is black	Press a key or move the mouse — it may just be asleep. Check a laptop has charge. Turn brightness up in Control Center.
No sound	Check the volume in Control Center isn't down or muted. Make sure sound isn't going to headphones or a TV you forgot about.

If this happens…	…try this
A website won't load	Try a different site to test the connection. Close the tab and reopen it. Restart Safari.

TIP

Write down what you did, in case it happens again

If a problem comes and goes, jot a quick note: what were you doing, what did the message say, what fixed it. This turns a baffling mystery into a pattern — and if you do call me, those few notes help me solve it in half the time. A little pad by the Mac is a handy thing.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Most problems, solved by you, in two minutes

You don't need to be a technician to handle the everyday hiccups. Restart, force-quit a stuck program, restart the router — these three moves clear up most of what ever goes wrong, and now they're yours. That's real confidence: not that nothing will ever glitch, but that you'll know what to do when it does.

CHAPTER 53

Storage: Making Room

Your Mac has a certain amount of **storage** — room to keep your files, photos, and programs, measured in "gigabytes" (GB). If it fills up, the Mac slows down and complains. Here's how to check, and how to make room without fear of deleting something you need.

Checking how much room you have

1. Click the **Apple logo** → **System Settings**.
2. Click **General**, then **Storage**.
3. A colored bar shows what's using your space — photos, apps, documents, and so on. Below it are suggestions for freeing up room.

Safe ways to free up space

- **Empty the Trash.** Deleted files sit in the Trash taking up room until you empty it. Right-click the Trash in the Dock and choose **Empty Trash**.
- **Clear out Downloads.** The Downloads folder collects things you've saved and forgotten. Look through it and delete what you no longer need.
- **Store photos in iCloud.** Turning on "Optimize Mac Storage" (in Photos settings) keeps full copies safely in iCloud while freeing room on the Mac.
- **Remove programs you don't use.** Open the Applications folder, drag an unwanted program to the Trash. (Stick to ones you installed yourself; leave Apple's own in place.)

HEADS UP

When in doubt, don't delete it

If you come across a file or folder and you're not sure what it is, **leave it alone**. The Mac keeps important system files tucked away, and you generally can't reach them by accident — but the safe habit is to only delete things *you* recognize and put there: your own documents, downloads, and photos. Never feel you must clear space by guessing. Call me and we'll tidy up together safely.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A roomy Mac is a happy Mac

Keeping a little breathing room in your storage keeps everything running smoothly and saves you the dreaded "disk full" message at the worst moment. A quick tidy of the Trash and Downloads now and then is all most people ever need.

CHAPTER 54

Battery Care for MacBooks

If you have a MacBook laptop, its battery is one of its best features — hours of use with no cord. A little understanding keeps it healthy for years. (Desktop Macs have no battery, so you can skip this chapter.)

The simple truth about the battery

Today's MacBook batteries are smart and sturdy. You do not need to "drain it fully" or follow any fussy ritual. Use it however suits you — on the cord, off the cord, plugged in overnight — and the Mac looks after the battery's health on its own behind the scenes. The old worries simply don't apply anymore.

Seeing your battery's health

1. Open **System Settings** → **Battery**.
2. You'll see how the battery has been used lately and, under **Battery Health**, its condition. "Normal" is what you want to see.
3. Over several years a battery naturally holds a little less charge — that's expected, not a fault, and it can be replaced when the day comes.

Stretching a charge when you're out

- Turn on **Low Power Mode** (in Battery settings) to gently extend a low battery.
- Dim the screen a little in Control Center — the screen is the biggest power user.
- Quit programs you're not using.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Hours of freedom, no fuss

Your MacBook's battery is meant to be used and enjoyed, not babied. Knowing it's sturdy and self-managing means you can take the Mac to the porch, the kitchen table, or the other side of the country without a second thought — and plug in whenever it's handy.

CHAPTER 55

Connecting Gadgets: Bluetooth, AirDrop & More

Your Mac loves company. It can connect to wireless headphones, a printer, your iPhone, a TV, and more — usually with no cables at all. Here are the connections worth knowing.

Bluetooth — for wireless gadgets nearby

Bluetooth is a short-range wireless link for gadgets close to the Mac: headphones, earbuds, a speaker, a mouse, a keyboard, even many hearing aids. Connecting one is called "pairing":

1. Put the gadget into pairing mode (its instructions say how — often holding a button until a light blinks).
2. On the Mac, open **Control Center** → **Bluetooth** (or System Settings → Bluetooth) and make sure it's on.
3. Your gadget appears in the list. Click it to connect. From now on it reconnects on its own when nearby and turned on.

AirDrop — passing files to another Apple device

AirDrop sends a photo or file wirelessly to someone's nearby iPhone, iPad, or Mac — no email needed. In a Finder window or when sharing a photo, click **Share** → **AirDrop**, then click the person's name when it appears. They tap **Accept** and the file flies over. Lovely for handing a photo to a family member sitting beside you.

Screen Mirroring — your Mac on the TV

If you have an Apple TV or a compatible smart TV, you can show your Mac's screen on it — grand for photos or a video. Open **Control Center** → **Screen Mirroring** and pick your TV from the list. Your Mac appears on the big screen for everyone to enjoy.

GOOD TO KNOW

Continuity: your Mac and iPhone as a team

Apple devices do clever things together, a feature called Continuity. Answer an iPhone call on your Mac; copy text on the phone and paste it on the Mac; start an email on one and finish on the other. It all just works when both use the same Apple ID. You needn't set anything up — just enjoy it when you notice it happening.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Everything works together

The Mac at the center of your gadgets means headphones that just connect, photos handed across the room in a second, and your phone and computer acting as one. Little conveniences, but together they make the whole setup feel smooth and modern — and entirely within your reach.

CHAPTER 56

Keeping Your Programs Up to Date

We covered updating macOS itself. The programs you add from the App Store get updates too — little improvements and fixes the makers send out. Keeping them current is easy and worth a glance now and then.

Updating App Store programs

1. Open the **App Store** from the Dock.
2. Click **Updates** in the list on the left.
3. If updates are waiting, click **Update** beside one, or **Update All** to do the lot.
4. They download and install quietly. You can keep using the Mac while they do.

TIP

Let App Store updates happen on their own

You can set programs to update themselves in **System Settings** → **App Store**. Turn on "Automatic Updates" and you'll stay current without thinking about it. It's a set-and-forget convenience that keeps everything running its best.

HEADS UP

Updates come from the App Store — nowhere else

A real update never arrives as a pop-up on a web page shouting that your software is "dangerously out of date, click here!" Those are tricks. Genuine updates come quietly through the App Store or Software Update. If a website ever pressures you to download an update or a "player" to watch a video, close it — and if you're unsure, call me.

CHAPTER 57

Adding a Screen, Keyboard, Mouse or USB Stick

Your Mac grows with you. You can plug in a bigger screen, a comfier keyboard, a different mouse, or a little memory stick to carry files — and most of it works the moment you connect it. Here's what's worth knowing.

A second (or bigger) screen

A larger monitor can make a laptop far easier on the eyes, and giving a desktop Mac a second screen means more room to spread out. Plug the monitor's cable into the right port on your Mac (USB-C/Thunderbolt or HDMI), turn the monitor on, and the Mac usually finds it at once. Fine-tune how the two screens sit together under **System Settings** → **Displays**.

A keyboard or mouse

- **With a cable:** plug it into a USB port and it just works.
- **Wireless:** turn the gadget on and pair it over Bluetooth (Control Center → Bluetooth), as we covered earlier.
- A full-size keyboard or a mouse that fits your hand can make a laptop much more comfortable at the kitchen table — there's no need to put up with cramped keys.

A USB stick or memory card

A **USB stick** (also called a flash drive or thumb drive) is a little gadget for carrying files between computers, or giving photos to a friend. Plug it into a USB port and it appears in the Finder's sidebar as a disk. Drag files onto it to copy them across.

HEADS UP

Eject before you pull it out

Before you physically remove a USB stick or external drive, tell the Mac you're done so it doesn't lose anything mid-copy: click the small **eject** symbol beside its name in the Finder sidebar, and wait for it to vanish from the list. Then it's safe to unplug. Pulling it out mid-write is the one way to garble the files on it.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A Mac that fits your body and your desk

You don't have to adapt to the machine — make it adapt to you. A bigger screen for tired eyes, a keyboard that's kind to your hands, a mouse that fits your grip. Plug in what helps, and the Mac welcomes it. Comfort isn't a luxury; it's what keeps the Mac a pleasure to use for the long haul.

PART 8

Your Everyday Cheat-Sheet

The quick reference to keep by the Mac: the moves at a glance, a plain-English glossary, where to learn more, and my standing offer to help.

CHAPTER 58

The Everyday Cheat-Sheet

Here's the one-page reference to come back to. Tear it out, fold it, keep it by the Mac — whatever helps. These are the moves you'll use every day.

The essential moves

To do this…	…do this
Open a program	Click its icon in the Dock once (or press Command-space, type its name, Return)
Find anything	Press Command-space for Spotlight, type what you want
Go back / undo a mistake	Press Command-Z
Copy something	Select it, press Command-C
Paste it elsewhere	Click where it goes, press Command-V
Save your work	Press Command-S
Close a window	Click the red dot (top-left of the window)
Fully quit a program	Its name in the menu bar → Quit (or Command-Q)
Fix almost anything	Apple logo → Restart
Handle a frozen program	Apple logo → Force Quit, pick it, Force Quit
Make text bigger on a web page	Press Command and the + key
Adjust volume / brightness / Wi-Fi	Control Center (two sliders, top-right)

Where things live

Place	Where it is & what it's for
The Apple menu	Top-left corner — About This Mac, System Settings, Restart, Shut Down.
The menu bar	Across the top — a program's commands (File, Edit, View) on the left; status icons on the right.
The Dock	Bottom of the screen — your favorite programs, one click away.
The Finder	The blue smiling face — all your files and folders.
Control Center	Top-right of the menu bar — Wi-Fi, sound, brightness, Focus.
Notifications	Click the clock (top-right) — recent alerts and widgets.
System Settings	Apple menu or the grey gear — where you change how things work.

TIP

Keep this page close for the first few weeks

Nobody memorizes all this at once, and nobody should try. Keep this cheat-sheet by the Mac and glance at it whenever you need to. Within a few weeks you'll find you've stopped needing it — the moves will simply be in your fingers. That's exactly how it's meant to go.

CHAPTER 59

A Plain-English Glossary

Every one of these words appears somewhere in the book. If you ever hit a term that's slipped your mind, this is the place to look it up.

Term	In plain English
macOS	The Mac's software — the master instructions that run it. Updated yearly with names like Tahoe.
Apple ID	Your personal account with Apple; an email and password that ties your devices together.
Desktop	The main screen you see after logging in — your Mac's home base.
Dock	The row of program icons along the bottom of the screen.
Menu bar	The strip across the very top, with the Apple menu and status icons.
Finder	The program for seeing and organizing your files and folders.
Spotlight	The search box (Command-space) that finds anything on your Mac.
Window	A rectangle that holds an open program or document; you can move and resize it.
Icon	A small picture standing for a program, file, or folder.
App / program / application	A tool that does one job — Mail for email, Safari for the web, and so on.
Click / double-click / right-click	Press once to choose; twice to open; with two fingers (or the right side) for a menu of options.
Drag	Press and hold on something, slide it, and let go — to move it.
Scroll	Slide two fingers on the trackpad to move up or down a page.
Trackpad	The smooth pad on a laptop you slide your finger on to move the pointer.
Pointer / cursor	The little arrow on screen that you move to point at things.
File	A single saved thing — a letter, a photo, a form.
Folder	A labeled container that holds files, like a paper folder in a drawer.
Save	To keep your work so you can open it again later (Command-S).
The Trash	The wastebasket where deleted files wait until you empty it.
Wi-Fi	The wireless way your Mac connects to the internet at home.
The internet	The worldwide network that carries email, the web, and video calls.

Term	In plain English
Browser	The program for visiting websites — on a Mac, Safari.
Website / web page	A place on the internet you visit to read, shop, or watch.
Link	Colored or underlined text (or a button) you click to jump to another page.
Bookmark / Favorite	A saved website address so you can return with one click.
Email	Written messages sent over the internet; the Mac's app is Mail.
Attachment	A photo or file sent along with an email.
iMessage	Apple's messaging service (the blue bubbles) between Apple devices.
FaceTime	A video call — a phone call where you can see each other.
iCloud	Apple's secure online storage that keeps your things safe and in sync.
The cloud	A plain way of saying "kept safely on the internet" rather than only on your Mac.
Backup	A spare copy of your things, kept safe in case the Mac is lost or breaks.
Time Machine	The Mac's tool for backing up your whole machine to an external drive.
Password	A secret word or phrase that unlocks an account or your Mac.
Two-factor authentication	An extra safety step: a one-time code or tap on top of your password.
Update	A free improvement from Apple that fixes problems and closes security holes.
Bluetooth	A short-range wireless link for nearby gadgets like headphones.
AirDrop	Sending a file wirelessly to a nearby Apple device.
Storage	The room on your Mac for files and programs, measured in gigabytes (GB).
Siri	The voice assistant you talk to, to ask questions or get things done.
Scam / phishing	A trick to fool you into giving up money, a password, or a code.

CHAPTER 60

Where to Learn More & When to Call Bill

You've reached the end of the book — well done. You needn't have memorized a word; that's what keeping it on the shelf is for. Here's where to turn when you want to learn more, and a few parting words from me.

Good places to learn more

- **Siri, first** — for a quick "how do I…", just ask out loud. Often the fastest answer there is.
- **The built-in Tips app** — short, friendly how-tos from Apple, right on your Mac.
- **support.apple.com** — Apple's own help website, searchable and reliable, with step-by-step articles for every Mac.
- **The macOS User Guide** — Apple's free, complete manual; search for it in Safari or find it in the Tips app.
- **GCFGlobal.org** — free, patient lessons for beginners and seniors; no sign-up, no cost.
- **YouTube how-tos** — search exactly what you want to do. (Stick to well-known channels, and never call a phone number a video flashes on screen.)
- **And me, anytime** — when you'd rather just ask a real person who'll explain it kindly.

A few parting words

Here's the truth to carry away from all these pages: **there is no such thing as a dumb question.** Not one. The folks I help are smart, capable people — they simply weren't handed a manual that spoke plainly. Now you have one.

Don't feel you have to learn it all at once — you never will, and you don't need to. Pick one small thing this week: practice copy-and-paste, make the text bigger, send a photo to a grandchild. Before long it feels like second nature. And truly, **you can't break it** — almost anything you change can be changed right back.

And if a call, text, or pop-up ever makes you uneasy, stop and call me *before* you do anything. Those "is this a scam?" calls aren't a bother; they're exactly what I'm here for. No charge, no judgment, ever, for asking.

How I can help

I'm Bill, and helping folks feel at home with their technology is what I've done for more than 30 years. I serve **Portage County, Ohio**, in plain English, at a pace that suits you — whether that's setting up a new Mac, getting your backups going, sorting out email, or just

answering the questions this book stirred up. There's never any rush and never any judgment.

FROM BILL

My standing offer

If anything in this book — or anything your Mac does — ever puzzles you, pick up the phone. No question is too small, no problem too silly. I'll come out, or talk you through it, as plainly and as patiently as it takes. That's the whole reason I do this work. Welcome to your Mac — you're going to do just fine.

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