

Extracted from:

Mac Kung Fu

Over 300 Tips, Tricks,
Hints, and Hacks
for OS X Lion

This PDF file contains pages extracted from *Mac Kung Fu*, published by the Pragmatic Bookshelf. For more information or to purchase a paperback or PDF copy, please visit <http://www.pragprog.com>.

Note: This extract contains some colored text (particularly in code listing). This is available only in online versions of the books. The printed versions are black and white. Pagination might vary between the online and printer versions; the content is otherwise identical.

Copyright © 2010 The Pragmatic Programmers, LLC.

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior consent of the publisher.

The Pragmatic Bookshelf

Dallas, Texas • Raleigh, North Carolina

The
Pragmatic
Programmers

Mac Kung Fu

Over 300 Tips, Tricks,
Hints, and Hacks
for OS X Lion



Keir Thomas

edited by Jacquelyn Carter



Many of the designations used by manufacturers and sellers to distinguish their products are claimed as trademarks. Where those designations appear in this book, and The Pragmatic Programmers, LLC was aware of a trademark claim, the designations have been printed in initial capital letters or in all capitals. The Pragmatic Starter Kit, The Pragmatic Programmer, Pragmatic Programming, Pragmatic Bookshelf, PragProg and the linking *g* device are trademarks of The Pragmatic Programmers, LLC.

Every precaution was taken in the preparation of this book. However, the publisher assumes no responsibility for errors or omissions, or for damages that may result from the use of information (including program listings) contained herein.

Our Pragmatic courses, workshops, and other products can help you and your team create better software and have more fun. For more information, as well as the latest Pragmatic titles, please visit us at <http://pragprog.com>.

The team that produced this book includes:

Jackie Carter (editor)
Potomac Indexing, LLC (indexer)
Molly McBeath (copyeditor)
David J Kelly (typesetter)
Janet Furlow (producer)
Juliet Benda (rights)
Ellie Callahan (support)

Copyright © 2011 Pragmatic Programmers, LLC.
All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior consent of the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America.
ISBN-13: 978-1-934356-82-1
Printed on acid-free paper.
Book version: P2.0—February 2012

Tip 1

See the iTunes Track in the Dock

Here's a handy little tweak for the Dock that will cause a pop-up window to momentarily appear each time iTunes begins playing a new track (see [Figure 3, A pop-out window showing the current iTunes track, on page 6](#)). It's so useful that it's hard to believe it isn't activated by default or is at least an official preference option. But it isn't.

Quit iTunes if it's open, then open a Terminal window (Finder→Applications→Utilities→Terminal) and type the following:

```
defaults write com.apple.dock itunes-notifications -bool TRUE;killall Dock
```

Then start iTunes and try playing a track. Neat, eh? The pop-up fades away after a few seconds.

To add the iTunes icon to the pop-up window, type the following into a Terminal window:

```
defaults write com.apple.dock notification-always-show-image -bool TRUE;  
killall Dock
```

To deactivate the pop-up at a later date, quit iTunes again, then open a Terminal window and type the following two lines:

```
defaults delete com.apple.dock itunes-notifications  
defaults delete com.apple.dock notification-always-show-image;killall Dock
```

Tip 2

Turn Off Fade and Pop-Up Animated Effects

Call me a cynic, but it feels like OS X is a little showy with its visual effects. Dialog boxes and some program windows pop onto the screen from nowhere. This design mirrors the iPod and iPad user experience. On a larger screen, however, the effect can be unsettling.

Mission Control

To turn off the Mission Control zoom effects that appear whenever it's activated and deactivated, open a Terminal window and type the following:

```
defaults write com.apple.dock expose-animation-duration -int 0;killall Dock
```

The changes take effect immediately. Note that this also removes the animated effect of windows zooming out of the way when Show Desktop is activated (usually via the “finger spread” trackpad gesture).

To revert to the default animated Mission Control effects, open a Terminal window and type the following:

```
defaults delete com.apple.dock expose-animation-duration;killall Dock
```

File and Print Dialog Boxes

To stop the Save and Print dialog boxes from sliding out and down from the title bar of each application, open a Terminal window and type the following:

```
defaults write -g NSWindowResizeTime -float 0.01
```

You'll need to log out and in again for the changes to take effect.

If you wish to reintroduce the visual effects at a later date, type the following, logging out and back in again afterward for the changes to take effect:

```
defaults delete -g NSWindowResizeTime
```

Launchpad

A hidden setting can be tweaked to make Launchpad appear and disappear instantly. To activate it, open a Terminal window (Finder→Applications→Utilities→Terminal) and type the following two lines, hitting **Return** after each:

```
defaults write com.apple.dock springboard-show-duration -int 0
defaults write com.apple.dock springboard-hide-duration -int 0;killall Dock
```

The changes take effect instantly. To revert to the previous animated effect, open a Terminal window again and type the following two lines:

```
defaults delete com.apple.dock springboard-show-duration
defaults delete com.apple.dock springboard-hide-duration;killall Dock
```

You can also reduce the amount of time the individual app list pages of Launchpad take to scroll in and out. Open a Terminal window and type the following if you want the pages to slide in and out instantly:

```
defaults write com.apple.dock springboard-page-duration -int 0;killall Dock
```

Exploring OS X Lion: Quick Look

Quick Look is a simple feature that lets you instantly preview the contents of files without having to open them in an application. To use Quick Look, just select a file in a Finder window or on the desktop and hit `Space` (or right-click the file and select Quick Look from the menu that appears). Its contents will be instantly viewable in a pop-up window that will disappear if you hit `Space` again or click the close button.

Quick Look understands most commonly used files, including Microsoft Office and iWork documents, images, and movies. The document formatting within Office documents isn't always great, but you can at least get an idea of the file's contents.

You select several documents at once and take a Quick Look at them as described above (hit `Space` or right-click and select Quick Look). They'll be arranged in a gallery within the Quick Look window, so you can rapidly glance through their contents.

The changes take effect immediately. To revert back to the default, open a Terminal window and type the following:

```
defaults delete com.apple.dock springboard-page-duration;killall Dock
```

Dock

The Dock can be hidden so that it slides off the screen when not being used. This saves a little screen space. Nudging the cursor against the edge of the screen where the Dock is normally positioned will make it slide back into view again. To turn this feature on or off, right-click the dashed lines between the main Dock icons and the stacks and select Turn Hiding On or Turn Hiding Off.

To make the Dock instantly leap back into view when it's needed, rather than slide, open a Terminal window and type the following:

```
defaults write com.apple.dock autohide-time-modifier -int 0;killall Dock
```

To revert back to the default sliding effect, open a Terminal window and type the following:

```
defaults delete com.apple.dock autohide-time-modifier;killall Dock
```

Tip 3

Start Apps Without the Mouse

A quick way to start an app that you don't have in the Dock is to hit **Command** + **Space** and begin typing its name. **Command** + **Space** activates the Spotlight search tool, and this will autocomplete the program name after just a few letters, selecting it automatically. All you need do is hit **Return** to run the app. I often use this to start programs I already have in the Dock if I don't want to take my hands off the keyboard.

Tip 4

Select Text Within a Quick Look Preview Window

If you use **Quick Look** to view any files that feature text—such as PDFs or Word documents—you'll notice that you can't click and drag to highlight text. Clicking anywhere on the **Quick Look** window simply moves it around.

However, a secret setting will let you click and drag as usual to highlight text, and you can use the standard key combination of **Command** + **C** to copy text. The **Quick Look** window can still be moved around the screen by clicking and dragging its title bar, as with any other program window.

To activate the setting, open a Terminal window (**Finder**→**Applications**→**Utilities**→**Terminal**) and type the following:

```
defaults write com.apple.finder QLEnableTextSelection -bool TRUE;killall
  Finder
```

The changes take effect immediately. To deactivate the setting, open a Terminal window and type the following:

```
defaults delete com.apple.finder QLEnableTextSelection;killall Finder
```


Tip 5

Make Resizing Windows Easier

You can resize any program window by hovering the mouse cursor over any of its borders until it changes to an arrow cursor and then clicking and dragging. However, it can be very difficult to get the mouse cursor in exactly the right spot.

Tweaking the following secret setting will increase the area in which the resizing cursor will activate. Open a Terminal window (Finder→Applications→Utilities→Terminal) and type the following:

```
defaults write -g AppleEdgeResizeExteriorSize 10
```

Then log out and back in again for the changes to take effect. You should now find that the cursor changes to the resize cursor when it's close to the outside edge of a window and no longer has to be precisely placed on the very edge.

To revert to the default setting, open a Terminal window and type the following:

```
defaults delete -g AppleEdgeResizeExteriorSize
```

Log out and back in again for the changes to take effect.

For easier resizing of windows, you can also hold down either **Option** or **Shift** (or both) as you click and drag any edge. The latter causes windows to contract vertically at both sides as you click and drag (a concertina effect), while the former shrinks the entire window—the equivalent of clicking and dragging a corner. Used together they cause the window to shrink into or out of its center point.

Tip 6

Get to the Dock During Full-Screen Mode

Many Mac apps, such as Safari and Mail, can run in full-screen mode, in which case they occupy a Mission Control space all of their own. Switching

an app to full-screen mode is usually done by clicking the small icon at the top right corner of the program window. Full-screen mode hides the menu bar at the top of the screen, along with the Dock. You can make the menu bar appear again by pushing your mouse cursor against the top edge of the screen and waiting for a second, but the same doesn't work with the Dock. Push it against the Dock's usual location on the screen and it resolutely refuses to appear.

In fact, it will appear, but you have to perform an odd little trick—push the mouse cursor against the edge of the screen where the Dock is normally positioned, then pause for a second before pushing again. This will cause the Dock to move into view. It takes a little bit of practice, so give it a go!

Tip 7

Switch Desktop Space by Nudging

If you use more than one desktop space, you might already know that if you click and drag program windows to the far right (or left) side of a screen, you can “nudge” the window into the next desktop space. To do this, drag the window so that the mouse cursor cannot move any further against the screen edge.

There's a one- or two-second delay before OS X switches to the neighboring desktop space, and you can speed this up using a hidden setting, as follows:

```
defaults write com.apple.dock workspaces-edge-delay -float 0;killall Dock
```

The desktop space will now change as soon as you touch the edge of the screen. I find this useful, but if you'd like a split-second delay before the desktop space switches, try the following:

```
defaults write com.apple.dock workspaces-edge-delay -float 0.15;killall Dock
```

To revert to the default second or two delay at a later date, open a Terminal window and type the following:

```
defaults delete com.apple.dock workspaces-edge-delay;killall Dock
```

Tip 8

Protect USB Memory Sticks with a Password

Lots of people use USB memory sticks to transfer data from one computer to another or just to keep their files with them at all times.

OS X Lion lets you format a USB memory stick so that its contents are encrypted. You'll need to enter a password whenever it's inserted.

Essentially this turns any USB stick into a ultrasecure portable file storage device, of the type often sold at a premium. However, bear in mind that the memory stick will only work on Macs also running OS X Lion and not on Macs running earlier versions of OS X or on PCs running Windows or Linux. To those operating systems, the memory stick will appear to be unformatted or corrupted. For a way of creating a cross-platform encrypted archive that you can store on a USB memory stick, see [Tip 110, Create Encrypted Archives for All Computers, on page ?](#).

For this tip to work, you'll need a memory stick of any size. Be aware that files already on the stick will be deleted during the formatting process, so you should temporarily copy them to a safe location and then copy them back once the following procedure is finished.

1. Start by opening Disk Utility (Finder→Applications→Utilities→Disk Utility) and then insert the USB memory stick you intend to use.
2. Look for the memory stick's entry in the list of disks on the left side of the Disk Utility window. It will probably be identified by its size. Select the entry, but make sure that you select the disk itself and *not* the partition(s), which will be listed below and indented slightly. For example, see [Figure 4, Creating a password-protected USB memory stick, on page 13](#).
3. Click the Erase tab in the Disk Utility window. In the dropdown menu alongside the Format heading, select Mac OS Extended (Journaled, Encrypted). In the Name field, type whatever you wish to call the memory stick. This name will appear in Finder's sidebar whenever you insert the stick in future.
4. Click the Erase button. You'll be prompted to enter a password and verify it by typing it again immediately below. It's important that you don't forget

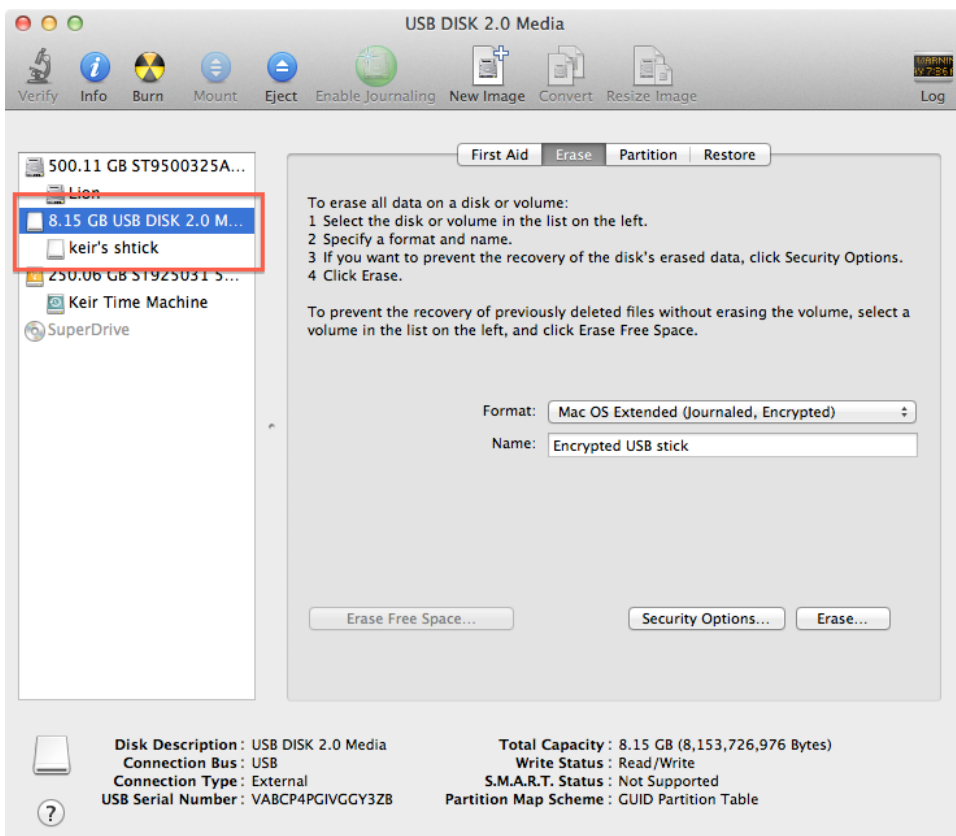


Figure 4—Creating a password-protected USB memory stick

this password! If you do there is absolutely no way of recovering the contents of the memory stick—they're lost forever. However, you will be able to reformat the memory stick so you can keep using it. Because of the risk, it's a good idea to type something in the Hint field that might provide a clue to what the password is—the hint will appear in future should you get stuck when entering the password.

- When you are done, click the Erase button in the dialog box. Erasing, partitioning, and encrypting will take a minute or two depending on the size of the memory stick. Once you're done, the new memory stick will be ready for use. You can copy files to it by selecting its entry in the sidebar of Finder. You can also close Disk Utility.

From now on you can use the encrypted memory stick just like any other memory stick. Before physically unplugging it, be sure to eject it by clicking the Eject button next to the disk's entry within Finder.

When you insert the memory stick, you'll be prompted for the password. If when prompted for the password, you put a check in the box next to Remember the Password in My Keychain, you'll never be prompted for the password again on that computer. However, if it's inserted into another Mac, the password prompt will appear. Therefore, you'll have a USB memory stick that—essentially—works seamlessly on your computer but whose data is inaccessible to anyone else.

Note that the steps outlined in this tip are not limited to USB memory sticks. You could encrypt an entire portable USB, Firewire, or Thunderbolt hard disk in this way, making it so that the contents will only be accessible upon entry of a password. Bear in mind that accessing an encrypted drive might be a little slower. However, this effect is only likely if you regularly save large files such as movies there.

Tip 9

Where Does Your Wallpaper Live?

This is a quirky but potentially useful tip that will make your Mac tell you the file location of the wallpaper you're currently using.

Open a Terminal window (Finder→Applications→Utilities→Terminal) and type the following:

```
defaults write com.apple.dock desktop-picture-show-debug-text -bool TRUE;
killall Dock
```

You should now find the filename and path of the wallpaper across the middle of the desktop—even when you access Mission Control and Dashboard.

To revert back to having no filename and path displayed, open a Terminal window and type the following:

```
defaults delete com.apple.dock desktop-picture-show-debug-text;killall Dock
```

Tip 10

Summarize Any Document

Some word processors include text-summarizing tools that can take salient points from several paragraphs (or even pages) and present them in a single paragraph or series of paragraphs. The summary is often a bit hit-and-miss, but it can be a good place to start if you lack the time to do the full job yourself. Your Mac includes a built-in tool to do this.

Setting Up the Service

Some initial setup is needed before you can make regular use of this tool. Open System Preferences (Apple menu→System Preferences), click the Keyboard icon, and ensure the Keyboard Shortcuts tab is activated. In the list on the left, select Services. Then put a check next to Summarize under the Text heading in the list on the right. Close System Preferences.

Summarizing Text

From now on, to summarize text just highlight the text in the program window and click the application menu, followed by Services, and then the Summarize entry. Not all apps are compatible with Services and therefore won't offer this feature—Microsoft Word 2011 is OK, but Word 2008 is a particularly annoying offender. However, it works fine in built-in OS X apps as well as in most Adobe apps that deal with text, like InDesign.

To use the Summary tool, click the Sentences or Paragraphs radio buttons to choose between summarizing text as a series of discrete sentences or as a series of paragraphs. The Summary Size slider adjusts the length of the summary, that is, it adjusts how much of the original text remains within the summary.

Tip 11

Activate Stacks and Mission Control by a Gesture

This is a neat little hack that lets you activate stacks within the Dock by hovering over it and making the scroll gesture on a multitouch trackpad or Magic Mouse or by rolling the scroll wheel on a mouse.

Do the same trick while hovering the mouse cursor over an app icon in the Dock, and App Exposé will activate. You will see open program windows for that particular app and—with compatible apps—the app’s document history. This is similar to the App Exposé option within the More Gestures section of the Trackpad entry within System Preferences.

However, in each case, once you’ve activated the secret setting, you need to scroll up to activate (that is, to make the stack expand), and then scroll down to deactivate (to make the stack hide again). You’ll need to scroll a substantial amount to activate the feature so that OS X knows you’re doing it on purpose and not accidentally. In other words, you’ll need to flick the scroll wheel up rather than just rotate it a few clicks.

To activate this hidden feature, open a Terminal window (Finder→Applications→Utilities→Terminal) and type the following:

```
defaults write com.apple.dock scroll-to-open -bool TRUE;killall Dock
```

The changes take effect immediately. To deactivate this feature, open a Terminal window and type the following:

```
defaults delete com.apple.dock scroll-to-open;killall Dock
```

Tip 12

Quickly Create a List of Files

Need to quickly create a text list of file and folder names within a directory? Open the directory in Finder and select all (**Command** + **A**), then copy to the clipboard (**Command** + **C**). Then open TextEdit, switch to plain text mode

(Format→Make Plain Text, or **Command** + **Shift** + **T**) and hit **Command** + **V** to paste. Don't worry—you won't paste the actual files into the document. Instead, you'll see a text list of the files and folders. This will work in any text-mode editor as well as in some word processors, such as Microsoft Word.

Tip 13

Take Ultimate Control of Scrolling

Here's a series of tips designed to give you more control over scrolling within Finder windows or when scrolling through documents and web pages.

Turning Off Inverted Scrolling

Compared to other operating systems, OS X inverts scrolling when you turn the mouse wheel or use the two-finger scroll gesture on a multitouch trackpad or Magic Mouse. It's entirely possible to get used to this, but if you just can't, here's how to turn it off, listed by pointing device:

- **Apple Magic Mouse:** Open System Preferences (Apple menu→System Preferences), click the Mouse icon, then select the Point & Click tab. Remove the check next to Scroll Direction: Natural. The changes will take effect immediately.
- **Other Mice (including the Apple mouse):** Open System Preferences (Apple menu→System Preferences), click the Mouse icon, and remove the check next to Move Content in the Direction of Finger Movement when Scrolling or Navigating. The changes will take effect immediately.
- **Trackpad:** Open System Preferences (Apple menu→System Preferences), click the Trackpad icon, then select the Scroll & Zoom tab. Remove the check next to Scroll Direction: Natural. The changes will take effect immediately.

Always Showing Scrollbars

OS X Lion hides scrollbars when they're not in use. To always show them, open System Preferences (Apple menu→System Preferences), click the General icon, and then click the radio button alongside the Always entry next to Show Scroll Bars.

Turning Off Inertia Scrolling

OS X Lion tries to mirror the experience of using an iPad or iPhone, and this includes inertia scrolling, where the page scrolls rapidly should you flick two fingers across a multitouch trackpad or Magic Mouse surface. What's actually happening is that the trackpad or mouse is sensing any acceleration in the finger gesture before you lift your finger from the surface. As such, it's not perfect and you might see acceleration occurring accidentally. Additionally, I find inertia scrolling gives me slight motion sickness on bigger screens.

It's possible to turn off inertia scrolling within System Preferences, but it's buried within the Universal Access pane. Start System Preferences (Apple menu→System Preferences) and click the Universal Access icon. Then click the Mouse & Trackpad tab and select the Trackpad Options button. In the dialog box that appears, select Without Inertia from the dropdown list next to the Scrolling checkbox.

This method only turns off inertia for trackpads, however. To turn it off for all pointing devices, including mice, open Terminal (Finder→Applications→Utilities→Terminal) and type the following:

```
defaults write -g AppleMomentumScrollSupported -bool FALSE
```

Log out and back in again for the change to take effect.

To reenable inertia scrolling, either repeat the steps above to activate it within System Preferences or open a Terminal window and type the following, logging out and back in again for the change to take effect:

```
defaults delete -g AppleMomentumScrollSupported
```

Scrolling Horizontally Using PC Mice

Newer Apple mice have special scroll balls or small trackpads that allow both vertical and horizontal scrolling. Most standard PC mice simply have a scroll wheel that allows only vertical scrolling. However, to scroll horizontally using any mouse, just hold down **Shift** while turning the wheel.

Jumping to a New Location Using the Scroll Bars

You can scroll up or down a page in the document or website you're viewing by clicking the area above or below the scroller in the scrollbar. Usually this will cause the application to scroll page by page. Sometimes, however, you might want to simply jump to a new location in the document without having to scroll one page at a time. To do so, move the cursor to where you want to

jump on the scrollbar, hold down **Option**, and click the mouse button. This will cause the slider to jump instantly to that spot.

This can be very useful if you want to jump to the beginning or end of a document—just hold down **Option** and click at the top or bottom of the scroll bar range.

Slowing Down Scrolling

Holding down **Option** while you click and drag the scroller (the little bar that shows your position within a document in the scrollbar) will slow down scrolling. It's best shown in practice, so give it a try—grab the scroller in any open window displaying a large file, then hold **Option** and drag. You see that as well as slowing down, scrolling becomes more fluid, making it easier to read the window contents as they scroll by.

Tip 14

Access All Keyboard Functions

Modern Mac portables and the Apple wireless keyboard only have a **Delete** key, which will delete characters behind the cursor. However, by holding down the **Fn** key (bottom left of the keyboard), you can turn the **Delete** key into a forward delete key, which, just like on a full-sized keyboard, will delete characters in front of the cursor.

While we're on the subject, pressing the **Fn** key at the same time as the up/down cursor keys will turn them into **Page Up**/**Page Down** keys. Holding **Fn** while hitting the left and right cursor keys transforms them into **Home** and **End** keys, respectively, which will either scroll to the beginning/end of the document or move the cursor to the beginning/end of the line, depending on which application you're using.

Tip 15

Fix Ugly Fonts on External Displays

If you attach a non-Apple external display, you might find fonts look a little faint or gritty because the font antialiasing hasn't been correctly set. The fix is easy—open a Terminal window (Finder→Applications→Utilities→Terminal) and type the following, logging out and back in afterward for the changes to take effect:

```
defaults -currentHost write -g AppleFontSmoothing -int 2
```

Should this method not work for you or if you're unhappy with the results, open a Terminal window and type the following, logging out and back in again for the changes to take effect:

```
defaults -currentHost delete -g AppleFontSmoothing
```

Tip 16

Easily Type Common Symbols and Characters

Here's how to insert commonly used symbols and characters into your text documents, as shown in [Figure 5, *Inserting various symbols via keyboard combinations, on page 21*](#). See also [Tip 42, *Type Diacritical Characters Easily, on page ?*](#). Note that this tip assumes you are using a US English keyboard.

Apple symbol

Hit **Shift + Option + K** to insert an Apple logo (🍏) into your text. Bear in mind that the symbol probably won't appear in documents or emails opened on other operating systems, such as Windows or Linux. Instead, these systems will probably display a square, indicating a missing character. Some Linux systems might display a symbol representing an apple, but not the Apple logo.



Figure 5—Inserting various symbols via keyboard combinations

Copyright

Hit **Option** + **G** to insert a copyright symbol (©) into your text. Typing (c) will achieve the same result in most applications (you'll need to hit **Space** after typing for the symbol to appear).

Currency

The dollar sign is typed by hitting **Shift** + **4**, as marked on the key. Here's how to type other common currency symbols:

- Cent (¢): **Option** + **4**
- Pound sterling (£): **Option** + **3**
- Japanese Yen (¥): **Option** + **Y**
- Euro (€): **Shift** + **Option** + **2**.

Dashes and Ellipses

To type an en dash, hit **Option** + **-**. To insert the longer em dash, hit **Shift** + **Option** + **-**.

To type an ellipsis character, that is, three periods in a row that indicate an omission, hit **Option + ;**.

Math Symbols

Many mathematical symbols are easily accessible via marked keys (to insert a less-than symbol, for example, hit **Shift + ,**). However, to insert other mathematical symbols, you'll need to hit the following key combos:

- Approximately (\approx): **Option + X**
- Degree ($^\circ$): **Shift + Option + 8**
- Division (\div): **Option + /**
- Infinity (∞): **Option + 5**
- Less than or equal to (\leq) and greater than or equal to (\geq): **Option + ,** and **Option + .**, respectively.
- Not equals (\neq): **Option + =**
- Pi (π): **Option + P**.
- Plus/minus (\pm): **Shift + Option + =**
- Square root ($\sqrt{\quad}$): **Option + V**
- Sum (Σ): **Option + W**

Trademark

Option + 2 will produce the trademark symbol ($^{\text{TM}}$). Typing tm followed by a space will do the same thing in most apps. **Option + R** inserts the registered trademark symbol ($^{\text{R}}$). Typing (r) will also insert the symbol within most apps.

Tip 17

Automatically Rename Photos

Digital cameras seem to like filenames such as DSCF0407.JPG. I don't know about you, but I prefer names such as Disneyland Vacation 023.jpg. Renaming each and every file can be somewhat annoying, but a quick and easy solution is to use Automator to do it for you (to learn what Automator is, see [Exploring OS X Lion: Automator, on page ?](#)). Here are the steps:

1. Create the folder to store the photos. This can be anywhere and called anything you choose. Then copy the image files into it. Make sure you only copy and don't move the files—keep the originals safe until you're sure the renaming has worked correctly!
2. Start the Automator program. It's among the first programs listed in the Applications view of Finder—its icon is a robot.
3. In the Choose a Type for Your Document dialog that appears, click the Application icon (again, the icon that's a robot) and then click the Choose button.
4. The Automator program window is a little daunting, but you can ignore most of it. In the Library list at the left of the Automator program window, select Files & Folders, and then in the list to the right, select Rename Finder Items. Click and drag this menu entry to the right of the program window and release over the spot that reads Drag Actions or Files Here to Build Your Workflow.
5. In the dialog box that appears, you'll be asked if you want to add an additional action to copy the renamed files. You don't need to do this, so click the Don't Add button.
6. You'll see a new element on screen, headed Add Date or Time. There, click the dropdown that reads Add Date or Time and select Replace Text.
7. You'll now need to use Finder to browse the store of photographs you want to rename in order to gather some information. Look at the typical filenames generated by your camera and work out which part you wish to replace with your own text. For example, photos from my camera always have a filename that begins with DSCF, followed by a sequential number, followed by the .jpg file extension. A typical filename might be DSCF0404.JPG. In that case, I'd like replace DSCF with something more descriptive, such as the location of the vacation I was taking.
8. Go back to the Automator program window and in the Find: field of your new action, enter the text you'd like replaced in the filename. (To continue my example, I would type DSCF.) In the Replace: field, type the text you want to appear instead. For example, for my most recent vacation, I might type Disneyland Vacation. See [Figure 6, Renaming files automatically using Automator, on page 24](#).
9. Once you've entered your replacement text, click File→Save and then give your new Automator Action a name. Anything will do, such as Rename Pictures. Choose somewhere to save it to, such as the desktop.

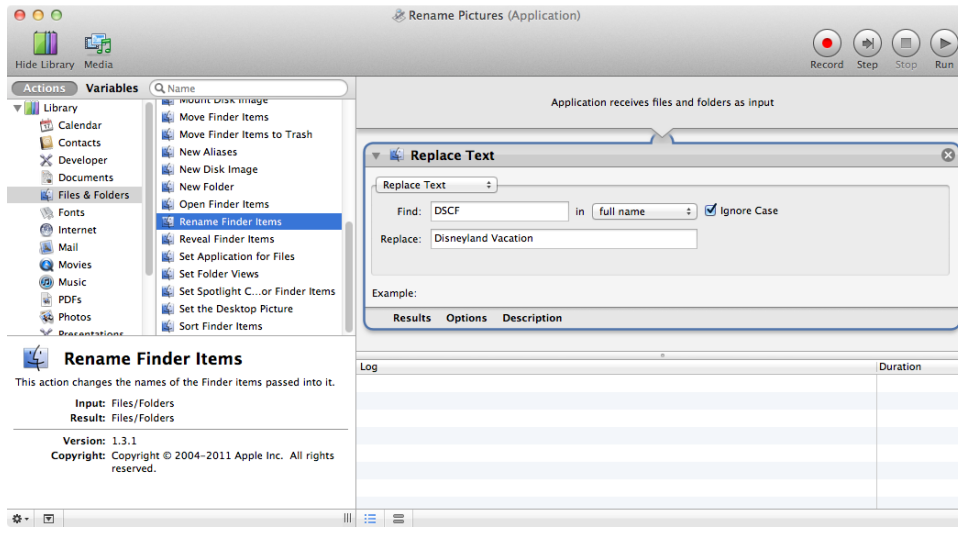


Figure 6—Renaming files automatically using Automator

10. Once saved, you can quit the Automator program. There's no need to click the Run button or test anything.
11. Your new Automator action icon will be where you saved it, and you can identify it by the same robot icon as the Automator application itself. All you need to do now is drag and drop the image(s) you copied earlier onto the icon. They will instantly be renamed within the folder. Once you are finished, you can either leave the Automator action where it is for future use or delete it.

Tip 18

Empty the Trash—Securely

Whenever you empty the Trash, the files are deleted in the standard way, that is, the OS X filesystem makes the space they occupied available for another use. However, the actual content of the files sticks around on the disk until it's overwritten, and it can be recovered using one of the many third-party file recovery tools available.

To avoid this you can securely empty the Trash, which involves writing over the data with zeroes so that it can't be recovered (at least outside of a high-tech crime lab), although bear in mind that the files might still exist in your Time Machine backup (see [Tip 212, Make Time Machine Forget a File, on page ?](#)).

Securely Emptying the Trash

To securely empty the Trash, simply click and hold the Trash icon in the Dock until the context menu appears. Let go of the mouse button and then hold down the **Command** key. The menu will change to read Secure Empty Trash. Click to do so. You can also open a Finder window and click the Secure Empty Trash entry on the Application menu.

Be aware that deleting files securely takes significantly longer than deleting unsecurely. With a very full Trash can, it might take hours. The work of securely emptying the Trash will take place in the background, however.

Always Emptying the Trash Securely

To always securely empty the Trash, open a Finder window and click the Application menu, then Preferences. Then click the Advanced tab and put a check next to Empty Trash Securely.

Tip 19

Personalize Every Icon

Any file can have a custom image assigned to it as its icon—from applications to files to desktop shortcuts—folders too. Here's how:

Using an Image as an Icon

1. Open the image you want to use as an icon in Preview. Select all (**Command** + **A**) and then copy it to the clipboard (**Command** + **C**). Close Preview.
2. Click the file whose icon you want to replace and hit **Command** + **I** to view the file's info. In the window that appears, click the icon preview at the very top left. This will highlight the icon. Hit **Command** + **V** to paste in the new icon image. The change should take place instantly.

Exploring OS X Lion: Mission Control

Mission Control is a multifaceted tool intended to give you a birds-eye view of your applications, among other things. It can be activated by clicking its icon on the Dock or by swiping three/four fingers up on a multitouch trackpad. It can also be activated by hitting the keyboard hotkey (usually the F3 key) or by tapping **Control**+Up.

Mission Control shows miniaturized previews of all active program windows so you can see at a glance what files you have open. More importantly, you can click any to bring it to the fore, ready for use.

But that's not all Mission Control does. It also lets you add *spaces* and switch between them. Spaces are additional desktops that slide in and out to replace your main desktop. You could create a new space just for web browser windows, for example, and another just for your mail program. To create a new space in Mission Control, move the cursor to the top right of the screen, where you'll see a plus icon appear. Click it to create a new space. You can switch between spaces by clicking their thumbnail previews at the top of the screen when Mission Control is active or by holding down Control and tapping the left and right cursor keys. You can also brush three fingers left and right on a multitouch trackpad to switch spaces.

Mission Control also allows quick access to the Dashboard, which is a separate space containing nothing but *widgets*—small programs with specific functions, such as showing the weather. To access the Dashboard, first activate Mission Control and then click the Dashboard thumbnail at the top left of the screen.

See [Tip 25, Be a Mission Control Power User, on page ?](#).

To restore the original icon, repeat the step to open the file's info window and again select the icon so it's highlighted, but this time hit the **Delete** key.

Using Icons from Other Files

You can also copy and paste icons from one file to another. Just open the info panel for each file, as described earlier, then highlight the icon in the first file by clicking it. Hit **Command**+**C** to copy the icon. Click to highlight the icon in the other info window that you want to replace, then hit **Command**+**V**.

Using this tip you can personalize the entire OS X interface. You can find icon replacements online at a variety of sources.¹ Usually, replacement icons can simply be dragged and dropped onto the icon preview at the top left in the info window, without the need to open and copy them first in Preview.

1. <http://interfacelift.com/icons>, for example.

Tip 20

Discover the Version Numbers of Software

If you want to check the version of an application, you can start it up and click the application's menu, then click About. Another, quicker way is to select the application in the Applications list in Finder and hit `Command + I` to bring up the info window. It will be listed under the General heading.