THE USEFUL TECH · POWER-USER SERIES

The Finder Power-User Cheat Sheet

The hidden modifier keys and Terminal commands that turn Finder into the fastest app on your Mac. Print it, pin it, stop forgetting them.

FREE · PAGE 1 OF 2

KEYS & MENUS

⌘ Command ⌥ Option ^ Control ⇧ Shift

Verified on macOS Sequoia & Tahoe (26), June 2026

The Option Key Rewrites Menus

Hold ⌥ while a menu is open and the commands change

FILE MENU

- Move to Trash → **Delete Immediately**
- Open → **Open and Close Window**
- Open With → **Always Open With**
- Close Window → **Close All**

WINDOW MENU

- Minimize → **Minimize All**
- Zoom → **Zoom All**

EDIT MENU

- Copy → **Copy as Pathname** ⌥ ⌘ C
- Paste Item → **Move Item Here** ⌥ ⌘ V
- Select All → **Deselect All**

GO MENU & GET INFO

- Go menu → **reveals ~/Library**
- Get Info → **Show Inspector** ⌥ ⌘ I
- Empty Trash → **skips the warning**

Essential Moves

keyboard and mouse

⌥ ⌘ V	**Move** copied files instead of pasting a duplicate
⌘ + click title	Jump to any **parent folder** in the hierarchy
⌥ + click ▶	List view: expand a folder **and all nested subfolders**
⌘ ⇧ .	Toggle **hidden files** on and off instantly
Space	While dragging, **spring a folder open** mid-drag
⌥ dbl-click |	Column view: **resize every column** at once
disk → Trash	**Eject** the drive (Trash becomes Eject)
⌘ drag	Across disks, **force a move** instead of a copy

Go to Folder ⌘ ⇧ G

Tab	Auto-complete folder paths
⌘ ↩	Open the location in a **new tab**
⌥ ⌘ ↩	Open it in a **new window**
⇧ ⌘ ↩	Open it directly in **Terminal**

Get Info Trio

+ folder sizes

⌘ I	Standard **Get Info** window
⌥ ⌘ I	**Inspector**: one live window that follows your selection
^ ⌘ I	**Summary Info**: total size of everything selected
⌘ J	View Options → tick **Calculate all sizes** → Use as Defaults

Commands on the back →

Page 2 has every Terminal tweak with the exact line that undoes it. Want more of this? Join the free community at **discord.gg/GRvDbWpDB** and grab the full guides at **gumroad.com/theusefultech**.

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Terminal Tweaks & the Undo Lines

Paste each into Terminal. Most need `killall Finder` after to take effect. Every one is reversible with the line below it.

Show the full path in the title bar

Every Finder window shows its complete location.

ENABLE

```
defaults write com.apple.finder
_FXShowPosixPathInTitle -bool true; killall Finder
```

UNDO

```
defaults write com.apple.finder
_FXShowPosixPathInTitle -bool false; killall Finder
```

Stop .DS_Store litter on drives

Network + USB. Per-user; affects new files only.

ENABLE

```
defaults write com.apple.desktopservices
DSDontWriteNetworkStores -bool true
defaults write com.apple.desktopservices
DSDontWriteUSBStores -bool true
```

UNDO

```
defaults delete com.apple.desktopservices
DSDontWriteNetworkStores
defaults delete com.apple.desktopservices
DSDontWriteUSBStores
```

Sort folders above loose files

Lists folders first, the way Windows does.

ENABLE

```
defaults write com.apple.finder _FXSortFoldersFirst
-bool true; killall Finder
```

UNDO

```
defaults write com.apple.finder _FXSortFoldersFirst
-bool false; killall Finder
```

Change where screenshots save + format

Send them to a folder and switch to JPG.

ENABLE

```
defaults write com.apple.screencapture location
~/Pictures
defaults write com.apple.screencapture type jpg;
killall SystemUIServer
```

UNDO

```
defaults write com.apple.screencapture location
~/Desktop
defaults write com.apple.screencapture type png;
killall SystemUIServer
```

Add a Quit command to Finder

Gives Finder its own ⌘Q (relaunch from the Dock).

ENABLE

```
defaults write com.apple.finder QuitMenuItem -bool
true; killall Finder
```

UNDO

```
defaults write com.apple.finder QuitMenuItem -bool
false; killall Finder
```

Make spring-loaded folders instant

Removes the delay before a folder springs open.

ENABLE

```
defaults write NSGlobalDomain
com.apple.springing.delay -float 0
```

UNDO

```
defaults delete NSGlobalDomain
com.apple.springing.delay
```

⚠ Read this before you blame the tricks

macOS Tahoe (26.1–26.2) shipped with real Finder bugs. Right-click menus sometimes collapse to just Get Info, Quick Look, and Copy; "Open in New Tab/Window" can vanish; and drag-and-drop occasionally bounces files back. If the Option-key menus above do not transform, you are likely seeing this bug, not a dead feature.

The fix is mundane: relaunch Finder from the Apple menu (Force Quit → Finder → Relaunch), then try again. One more change to know: since Sequoia, **Copy as Pathname** wraps any path containing spaces in single quotes, which is great for Terminal but adds a step when pasting into spreadsheets.

Steal these. Share the source, not the file.

Made by Raja at The Useful Tech, the #1 Apple-focused publication on Medium. For the full playbooks, join the free **Useful Tech Club on Discord** and browse the library at **gumroad.com/theusefultech**.

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