

How to Shut Down Your Mac

Your Macintosh computer likes to be shut down in an orderly fashion. If it is suddenly deprived of electrical power it gets grumpy and may do some strange things the next time you start it. This Nitty-Gritty will take you through the preferred way to shut down our computer.

Note: If for some reason your Mac freezes and nothing happens when you move the mouse, there is a way to shut down your computer and re-start. That procedure is the topic of another Nitty-Gritty.

Background:

The Power key on the very early Mac keyboards, when they had one, was inoperative. About 1995 in both the Mac OS and Mac hardware, the power key became an integral part of the whole shebang. This continues in the most recent Mac models and OS versions. There are variations in the shut down procedure in some Mac models but for the most part they are rare enough to escape notice for most of us. (For example, the Mac 5400 had a remote control with an "Off" switch. Who has ever seen a 5400?)

Good Mac housekeeping requires closing each open window and quitting each open application before shutting down. Shutting down the Mac by "pulling the plug" (i.e. by abruptly switching off the electrical power) when an application is running is asking for problems. Not necessarily catastrophic problems but problems nevertheless.

Why does Apple care how you shut down? The rationale is the Mac needs to do some 'housekeeping' before turning off the machine; cutting off electrical power deprives the Mac of the chance to take care of these tasks. The checklist includes:

- 🍏 Updating your invisible Desktop file with your current icon and window positions.
- 🍏 Offering you the chance to save your work in any documents still open.
- 🍏 Correctly quitting any open programs, deleting any "temp files" in the process.
- 🍏 Ejecting any floppy, CD or Zip disks that are loaded.

Shut Down Procedure:

The "preferred" way to shut down a Mac is:

1. Press the Power key on the keyboard
2. In the alert box that appears, click "Shut Down"
3. (Alternatively you can press the return key when the alert box appears to activate the "Shut Down" button.)

Another acceptable shut down procedure:

1. Go to the "Special" pull down menu.
2. Select "Shut down"

With either of these procedures, your Mac will close all open windows, Quit all running applications, eject any CD, Zip or floppy disks you may have loaded and after a moment turn itself off. It remembers all the icons you had on your desktop when you shut down and where they were located. The next time you boot up your computer the Desktop will look just as it did when you shut down.