

Alias Basics

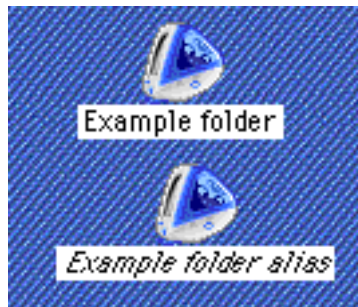
What's an Alias?

An alias is look-alike icon that provides a shortcut back to the original file it represents. Aliases are frequently referred to as pointers.

Here's how you make an alias:

1. Select (highlight) a disk, file, or folder on the Desktop
2. Go to the File pull down menu and select Make Alias.
Alternate: press ⌘ M
Alternate: In Mac OS 8.0 and later, press ⌘-Option & drag the icon a short distance.

Secret: In Mac OS 8.0 and later, pressing ⌘-Option & dragging an icon into another folder gives you alias that doesn't say *alias* at the end of its title.





You have made what looks like an exact copy of the original item, overlapping slightly with the original selected icon. The alias you made looks identical to the original icon in every way —except that its name is in italics and may have the word "alias" appended to it. In Mac OS 8.5 and later it will have a little arrow superimposed on it. Opening the alias has the same result as opening the original file, folder or application.

After you create the alias, you can rename it just like any other icon and drag it to wherever you'd like, even to another disk drive.

What is an alias good for?

Here are some of the best ways to use aliases to streamline your work:

- 1. Add aliases of frequently used applications and documents to the menu. To do this, put the aliases in the Apple Menu Items folder (located within the System Folder).**
- 2. Place aliases of files and folders you open frequently right on the Desktop.**
- 3. Make aliases of the control panels you use the most and put them in the  menu, on the Desktop, on the Launcher, or in other convenient spots. Making an alias of a specific control panel saves you the step of choosing something from the Control Panels menu. (The Control Panels folder listed in your  menu is itself an alias. If it weren't there, you'd really have to do some digging to get to a control panel.)**
- 4. Put aliases of the Trash in as many folders as you'd like. Whenever you have to trash a file, you can just drop it in the nearest Trash can.**
- 5. Aliases can greatly simplify setting up file sharing for users connected to a network. Here's how. When you're on a network and you've brought another Mac's hard disk onto your Desktop, make an alias of any shared program, document, or folder. When you're off-line and you'd like to reconnect, just double-click the alias. Your Mac automatically looks for the original item, locates it on the other Mac on the network, and pops it onto the screen. (If a password is required, you'll be asked for it first.) This works even if you're thousands of miles away. That's right: if you made an alias of your office servers while you're connected to them using Apple Remote Access (ARA), then double-clicking that alias (presumably on your PowerBook) will automatically dial and tap into your office network.**
- 6. Make an alias of your hard disk icon and put it into the Apple Menu Items folder and see what happens when you select it there.**

More Info about Aliases

You can create an alias of virtually any disk, document, application, or folder. You can make aliases of your whole hard drive, a control panel, the System Folder —any item you'd like to be able to grab and open easily and quickly. "Why would I want to make an alias of my hard drive?" you ask. Well, there's a neat little secret about making an alias of your hard, putting it into a RAM disk and putting the icon of your hard drive in the trash. Sounds scary, huh? That's another Nitty-Gritty.

Aliases take up very little room—generally a few kilobytes each —so you can make as many as you'd like without crowding your hard drive.

Avoid making aliases of aliases, though. You can certainly do it, but you increase the risk that, by accidentally throwing one of them away, you'll "break the chain" that points from alias to alias all the way back to the genuine file.

Talk about smart, starting in Mac OS 8.5 , when double-clicking an alias whose original item has gone off to that great Trash can in the sky, the Mac OS actually offers to take care of the problem for you. Click Delete Alias to delete the orphaned alias; click Fix Alias to select a different file —a file to which you'd like this alias to point now.