

How to Print Screen on a Mac



What is known as “Print Screen” in the Windows world is called screen captures or screen shots in Mac OS X. You’ve probably noticed there is no ‘Print Screen’ button on a Mac keyboard, this is to both simplify the keyboard and also because it’s just unnecessary. On the Mac, instead of hitting a “Print Screen” button, you’ll hit one of several keyboard combination shortcuts to perform a specific action, depending on the exact screen capture action you want taken. This is both easier and much more powerful, given that there are ultimately six unique options to perform variations of the screen print.

How to Print Screen to a File on the Desktop in Mac OS X

The basic functionality of taking a screen shot of a window or desktop in Mac OS X takes a complete image capture of the desktop and all open windows and running apps and dumps it to a unique file on the Mac desktop. Each keyboard shortcut will use the pressing of the Command and Shift keys concurrently as the basis for execution, followed by a number or another key:


- **Command+Shift+3:** takes a screenshot of the full screen (or screens if multiple monitors), and save it as a file to the desktop
- **Command+Shift+4:** brings up a selection box so you can specify an area to take a screenshot of, then save it as a file to the desktop
- **Command+Shift+4, then spacebar, then click a window:** takes a screenshot of a window only and saves it as a file to the desktop

Because this approach effectively ‘prints’ the screen to the desktop as a unique file containing the screen capture, it removes the unnecessary step of having to paste the screen shot into another application and then save it manually. If you’d rather not save the file to the desktop though, you can have it copied to the clipboard instead, which can then be pasted elsewhere just like what happens in the Windows world.

How to Print Screen to the Clipboard on a Mac

Saving the capture directly to the clipboard functions a lot more like the Print Screen feature in the Windows world. If you want to do the Mac equivalent of Print Screen, storing the image in the clipboard so that you can paste it into another app or document, these are the commands you'd want to use instead:

- **Command+Control+Shift+3:** take a screenshot of the entire screen, and saves it directly to the clipboard for pasting elsewhere
- **Command+Control+Shift+4, then select an area:** takes a screenshot of the selection using the rectangular drawing box, and saves it to the clipboard for pasting elsewhere
- **Command+Control+Shift+4, then space, then click a window:** takes a screenshot of a window as specified by the hovering snapshot cursor, and saves that capture to the clipboard for pasting

Remember that the Command key on some older Mac keyboards has an Apple logo on it like this , but newer Mac keyboards will simply say 'command'. The command key is located next to the spacebar. Here is what the primary Print Screen equivalent looks like on a standard Apple keyboard, all keys in red should be pressed simultaneously:



One final thing to note here involves multiple monitors; screen shots that aim to copy the entire screen will copy *all screens* if the Mac is using multiple displays. That does not apply to the rectangular drawn box method, or to choosing a shot of a specific window rather than the full screen.

Source: <http://osxdaily.com/2010/05/13/print-screen-mac/>