

Where is the Control Panel on the Mac?

If you are new to Mac and want to change some system settings, you can find a tool equivalent to Control Panel on Mac. That tool is called System Preferences, and here's how to use it.

System Preferences is the Control Panel on the Mac

While Windows calls its system settings 'settings', macOS uses a different word, 'preferences'. Before you want to change any settings, you have to open the System Preferences app first.

On newer Mac and MacBook desktops, System Preferences will be defaulted right out of the Dock. It's gray, the icon is a cog, click on it to open System Preferences.

Picture 1 of Where is the Control Panel on the Mac?

The System Preferences icon in the Dock

Another way to open System Preferences

If the System Preferences icon is not in the Dock, or you want to get to it faster, click the Apple icon in the left corner of the screen and choose System Preferences... from the list.

Picture 2 of Where is the Control Panel on the Mac?

Accessed from the Apple menu

Another way is to use Spotlight or Launchpad search. With both of these methods, you must type system preferences then press Enter to open the app.

A quick introduction to System Preferences

After opening System Preferences, you will see a window with lots of icons divided into four sections.

Picture 3 of Where is the Control Panel on the Mac?

Four sections are in the System Preferences menu

First, we have the Apple account area. If you are signed in to your Apple account, click on it to change the personal information on your account, iCloud settings, App Store payment methods, .

Just below are basic macOS software tuning settings, including Dock, wallpaper, and notifications. These settings will show how the operating system works.

Next we have the hardware settings of the Mac, have audio input and output, mouse or trackpad, Bluetooth, monitor.

Finally, you will see a few icons for external applications, such as Adobe Flash. Every icon here (if applicable) is installed and is not an official macOS app.

Adjust System Preferences

Using System Preferences is easy, just find the setting you want to change and click on it.

Usually, you can use the two arrow buttons at the top of the System Preferences window to switch between tabs in an application. You can also click the main menu return button (the button with 12 black dots) to see the entire Preferences menu again.

Picture 4 of Where is the Control Panel on the Mac?

The main controls on System Preferences

If you can't find the setting you want to fix, you can use the 'Search' bar in the right corner of the window to search in System Preferences.

Picture 5 of Where is the Control Panel on the Mac?

Search bar

Click on a result that most closely resembles what you're looking for and you'll be taken straight to the feature settings page.

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