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how to print screen on a mac

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How to Print Screen on a Mac: A Comprehensive Guide

When you need to capture a moment on your screen and send it to a printer—whether it's a screenshot of a design, a web page, a spreadsheet, or a screenshot from a video—macOS offers a range of built in tools and shortcuts to make the process quick and painless. In this guide we'll walk through every method you can use to **print screen on a Mac**, from the classic keyboard shortcuts to the modern Screenshot toolbar, and we'll cover how to edit, format, and troubleshoot before you hit the print button.

What Is "Print Screen" and Why It Matters on macOS?

"Print Screen" is a term that originated with Windows PCs, where pressing the PrtScn key copies the entire display to the clipboard or saves it directly to a file. On macOS, the concept is the same—capture your screen and then print it—but the implementation is a bit different. macOS doesn't have a dedicated Print Screen key; instead, it relies on a combination of modifier keys and the Command key to perform the same function. Knowing how to do this efficiently can save time in presentations, bug reports, design reviews, and more.

Built In Mac Screenshot Options

Apple has built a powerful screenshot system that works across all macOS versions. You can capture the entire screen, a selected window, or a specific area. Once captured, the image can be saved, copied to the clipboard, or printed directly. Below we detail the shortcuts and the Screenshot toolbar introduced in macOS Mojave (10.14) and later.

Keyboard Shortcuts

These shortcuts work on all modern Macs, regardless of the macOS version. They're the fastest way to capture a screenshot and then print it.

- Command /+ /Shift /+ /3 – Capture the entire screen. The file is saved to your Desktop by default.
- Command /+ /Shift /+ /4 – Capture a selected portion of the screen. After pressing the keys, drag to select the area. Release the mouse or trackpad to capture.
- Command /+ /Shift /+ /4 /+ /Spacebar – Capture a specific window. The cursor turns into a camera icon; click the window you want to capture.
- Command /+ /Control /+ /Shift /+ /3 – Capture the entire screen and copy it to the clipboard instead of saving it.
- Command /+ /Control /+ /Shift /+ /4 – Capture a selected portion and copy it to the clipboard.

Once the screenshot is taken, you can open it in Preview, drag it to a document, or simply press Command + P to open the print dialog.

Using the Screenshot Toolbar (macOS Mojave and Later)

Press Command /+ /Shift /+ /5 to bring up the toolbar. This interface gives you more control and options:

- Capture Entire Screen
- Capture Selected Window
- Capture Selected Portion

- Record Entire Screen (video)
- Record Selected Portion (video)
- Timer options (3 or 10 seconds delay)
- Choose where to save the screenshot (Desktop, Documents, Clipboard, etc.)

After taking the screenshot, a thumbnail appears in the lower right corner of the screen. Click it to open the editing interface, where you can crop, annotate, or add shapes before printing.

Printing a Screenshot: Step by Step

Once you have your screenshot ready, you'll want to print it. The process is straightforward but offers several options to customize the output.

1. Open the screenshot in Preview (double click the file). If the screenshot is already in the clipboard, paste it into Preview via Command /+ /V.
2. In Preview, click File /!' /Print or press Command /+ /P.
3. In the print dialog, choose the printer and adjust settings such as paper size, orientation, and scaling.
4. If you only want a portion of the screenshot, click Show Details and use the Pages dropdown to select the page range (Preview automatically creates a single page per screenshot).
5. Click Print to send the job to the printer.

Tip: If you frequently need to print screenshots, consider creating a custom **Print Preset** in Preview. Go to **File /!' /Print Presets /!' /Save Current Settings As...** and give it a name. This preset remembers your paper size, scaling, and other options, saving you time on future prints.

Editing a Screenshot Before Printing

macOS's built in Preview editor is powerful enough for most needs:

- Crop – Drag the edges of the image to resize.
- Markup – Use the toolbar to add arrows, text, shapes, and highlights.
- Adjust Color – Use the "Adjust Color" tool to correct brightness, contrast, and saturation.
- Use the Annotate sidebar in the Screenshot toolbar to add notes before printing.

Once you've edited the screenshot, simply print it as described above. If you need to print multiple screenshots in a single document, you can drag them into a single PDF in Preview and print the PDF.

Printing a Screenshot from the Clipboard

If you captured a screenshot directly to the clipboard (using Command + Control + Shift + 3 or Command /+ /Control /+ /Shift /+ /4), you can print it without saving to disk:

1. Open Preview (or any app that can accept pasted images).
2. Press Command /+ /V to paste the image.
3. Go to File /!' /Print or press Command /+ /P and print.

This method is handy for quick prints or when working in a document editor like Pages or Microsoft Word.

Using Terminal for Advanced Screenshot Printing

Power users can leverage the screencapture command in Terminal to capture and print screenshots programmatically. This is useful for scripting or automating repetitive tasks.

```
screencapture -x -t png ~/Desktop/screenshot.png
open -a Preview ~/Desktop/screenshot.png
```

The -x flag suppresses the shutter sound, and -t png sets the file format. After capturing, the script opens the image in Preview, where you can print it manually. You can extend the script to open the print dialog automatically using AppleScript or Automator.

Third Party Screenshot and Printing Tools

While macOS's built in tools are powerful, some users prefer third party apps for additional features such as cloud integration, advanced annotation, or automated workflows. Popular options include:

- Snagit – Offers extensive editing, video capture, and direct printing options.
- CleanShot X – Provides cloud storage, annotation, and a streamlined print workflow.
- Skitch – Simple annotation tool that integrates with Evernote and other services.

These apps often come with dedicated print shortcuts or "Print" buttons that bypass Preview, making it even easier to send a screenshot straight to the printer.

Common Issues and Troubleshooting

Even with built in tools, you may run into hiccups. Here are some common problems and how to fix them:

- Screen not capturing – Ensure you're pressing the correct keys. If you're using an external keyboard, double check that the Command key is functioning.
- Print dialog not opening – Try resetting the printing system: System Preferences /!' /Printers & Scanners /!' /Right click on the printer list !' Reset printing system…
- Image appears blurry when printed – Verify the print resolution settings. Choose "Best" or "High Quality" in the print dialog, and make sure the scaling is set to 100 /%.
- Print job stuck in queue – Restart the printer and the Mac. Clear the print queue from the printer icon in the menu bar.
- Unable to edit after capture – If the screenshot opens as a PDF, you may need to export it to PNG or JPEG before editing in Preview.

Tips and Best Practices for Printing Screenshots on a Mac

Follow these simple guidelines to ensure your prints look sharp and professional:

- Use the highest resolution settings – In the print dialog, select "Best" or "High Quality" and avoid scaling up the image.
- Choose the right paper size – If your screenshot is a web page, A4 or Letter often works best. For icons or small graphics, consider using a smaller paper size to avoid excessive white space.
- Check the orientation – Landscape orientation is usually preferable for wide screenshots.
- Annotate before printing – Adding callouts or highlights can make the print more informative.
- Save a copy for future use – After printing, keep a PDF or JPEG version in a dedicated folder for quick access later.

Conclusion

Printing a screenshot on a Mac is a straightforward process once you know the right shortcuts and tools. Whether you're using the classic keyboard combinations, the modern Screenshot toolbar, or a third party app, macOS

provides all the functionality you need to capture, edit'"

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