Mac Basics

A Mac is the computer made by Apple — a MacBook if it is a laptop, an iMac or Mac mini if it sits on a desk. The system that runs it is called macOS.

The three places everything happens

- The menu bar — the thin strip across the very top. The Apple menu (top-left corner) is home base: About This Mac, System Settings, Sleep, Restart, and Shut Down all live there. The words next to it change with whichever app you are using.
- The Dock — the row of app icons along the bottom. Click an icon to open that app. A small dot under an icon means the app is already running.
- The desktop — the screen behind everything, like the top of a real desk.

Finder: where your files live

Look for the smiling face — that is Finder, the Mac's version of File Explorer. Open it and you get your files and folders, a sidebar with quick places (Desktop, Documents, Downloads), back-and-forward arrows, and a search box in the top-right corner that finds any file in seconds.

Opening apps: three easy ways

1. Click the app in the Dock. If it is there, this is the fastest way.
2. Press Command + Space, then type the app's name. This is called Spotlight, and it is the Mac's fastest trick — type a few letters, press Enter, and the app opens. It finds files and emails too.
3. Open Finder and click Applications in the sidebar — every app on your Mac is listed there.

Heads-up: the old Launchpad grid of apps is gone in the new macOS versions. Spotlight's Apps view (press Command + Space, then Command + 1) is its replacement.

Everyday tasks

- Connect to Wi-Fi: click the Wi-Fi symbol in the top-right corner of the menu bar and pick your network. Or go the long way: Apple menu → System Settings → Wi-Fi.
- Make text bigger: Apple menu → System Settings → Accessibility → Display → Text size, then drag the slider. This enlarges text in Finder, Mail, Messages, Notes, and Calendar.
- Sleep, restart, or shut down: click the Apple menu (top-left). Sleep is a light nap — everything stays exactly as you left it. Restart fixes a surprising number of glitches. Shut Down turns the Mac fully off.
- Get apps: the App Store (the “A” icon in the Dock) is where you find new apps — search, click Get, done. Your app updates live here too.

Switching from Windows? Here is what is called what

- Finder = File Explorer
- Dock = the taskbar
- System Settings = Settings (older Macs call it System Preferences)
- Trash (in the Dock) = the Recycle Bin
- Safari = the built-in web browser, like Edge or Chrome
- The Command (⌘) key does what Control does on Windows — Command-C to copy, Command-V to paste.
- One big difference: closing a window (the red button) does not always quit the app. To truly quit, click the app's name in the menu bar and choose Quit, or press Command-Q.

Which version do I have — and do I need the newest one?

Click the Apple menu and choose About This Mac — it shows your version. There is no rush to update: the previous version still works fine and keeps getting security fixes. And if your Mac has an older Intel chip inside, it simply cannot run the very newest macOS — that is okay, it will keep working as it always has.

When to call Sean instead

- Your Mac offered an update and you are not sure whether to say yes.

- Wi-Fi will not connect no matter what you try.
- An app keeps crashing or a window will not close.
- You are thinking about switching from Windows to Mac (or the other way) and want honest advice first.

Call Sean at (813) 770-6082.

Need a hand? Call Sean at **(813) 770-6082**.