

LEARNING MADE EASY



5th Edition

Macs[®]

FOR SENIORS

for
dummies[®]
A **Wiley** Brand



Set up and
customize your Mac

Chat with friends through
Mail and FaceTime[®]

Stay safe with Mac's
security features

Mark L. Chambers

Author of *MacBook For Dummies*,
10th Edition and *iMac For Dummies*,
11th Edition



Macs[®] For Seniors

5th Edition

by Mark L. Chambers

for
dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand

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Introduction

Is a Macintosh the computer for you? I can unequivocally answer “Yes!” Why am I so sure? Because Apple has been producing the best consumer computers and applications for many years now — desktops, laptops, and software that surpass anything else now offered on the market. (Yes, that includes other famous companies you’ve heard of, such as Dell and Microsoft.) Macs are designed to be easy and fun to use, and computing beginners will find that Apple has a knack for writing the best personal-computer software around.

Let me be honest: I’m not easily impressed when it comes to computers. As a cynical old computer programmer and curmudgeon, I’ve used every version of Windows that His Gatesness has produced, including the latest, Windows 11 (in fact, I still have my original five-disk installation set for Windows 1.0). I’ve used many Mac versions all the way back to 1989. I’m very sure that you’ll have the same great experience I’ve had using a Mac. Macs are just easy and fun! (And yes, that’s coming from a fellow senior.)

The current operating system, macOS (now in version 15, called Sequoia), performs like a Ferrari and looks as good, too. And don’t let that term OS throw you. That’s just the name for the engine under the hood. See? Easy.

The book you hold in your hands is written especially for seniors, using the *For Dummies* design. You’ll find easy-to-follow and light-hearted step-by-step instructions for using the major features of both your computer and Sequoia. What you *don’t* find in this book is wasted space or a bunch of intimidating computer terms. Everything is explained from the ground up, just in case you’ve never touched a computer, let alone one from Apple.

Foolish Assumptions

All you need to follow along with this book is a Mac running macOS version 15 (Sequoia). (A desk, good light, and mouse pad are all up to you.) Even if you have a Mac running an earlier version of macOS, this

book will still become a trusted friend, although some of the screen shots throughout the book will look a little different from what you'll see on your screen, and some things I talk about may not quite jibe. If you're at the point of buying your Mac — maybe you're standing in a bookstore right now! — go right to Chapter 1 for some helpful advice on your choices and options.

Here's the good news: You *don't* require any of the following:

- » **A degree in computer science:** Apple designed Sequoia and Macs for regular people, and I designed this book for people of various experience levels. Even if you've never used a Mac, you'll find safe waters here.
- » **A fortune spent on software:** Almost every program covered in this book is included with macOS Sequoia — and the size of this volume gives you a rough idea of just how complete Sequoia is! Heck, many folks buy Macs just because of the free software they get, such as Pages, Numbers, and Photos.
- » **An internet connection:** Granted, you can't do much with Apple Mail (email), FaceTime (video chatting) or Messages (instant messaging) without an internet connection, but computers *did* exist before the internet. You can still be productive with macOS without receiving buckets of junk email. And if you already have an internet connection, this book helps you connect and become familiar with the best of what's online!



TIP

I'm guessing that you probably do want an internet connection (if you don't already have one). See Part 4 for help with getting online. I also recommend using a power strip with a surge-protection feature for powering your Mac, but that's your call, too.

About This Book

This book is organized in a straight-through, linear fashion, although you don't have to read it that way (and certainly not in one session). Having said that, you can also just hop right to whatever chapter

fits the bill for you. If you do go to a more advanced topic — or need a refresher on something — I give you lots of signposts to related chapters where you can find more information.

The book is divided into parts, each of which covers a different area of Mac knowledge. You'll find parts on software, the internet, and Mac maintenance, for example. Each chapter discusses a specific application, connection, or cool feature of your Mac. So feel free to begin reading anywhere or to skip chapters at will. I do recommend that you read this book from front to back, as you would any good mystery novel, but it's your choice. (Watch out, though. Oncoming spoiler: For those who want to know right now, Microsoft did it.)

If you've read any other *For Dummies* books, you know that they come with a helpful, simple set of conventions. Here's what you find in this book:

- » When I ask you to type a command (tell the computer to do something) or enter information (such as your name or phone number) in a text field, the text appears in bold like this: **Type me**. Then you just press the Return key (on the keyboard) to send the command or enter the text. Easy.
- » When I give you a set of menu commands to use in a certain order, they appear in the following format: Edit ⇨ Copy. In this example, you click the Edit menu and then choose the Copy menu item, in that order.
- » Sometimes when you tell the computer to do something — like make a word bold — you can use keyboard shortcuts instead of using a menu and clicking things. Keyboard shortcuts look something like this: ⌘+B. You press and hold down the ⌘ key and then press B. (No need to press Shift to make a capital letter: Just press B or whatever.) You might also see three keys strung together, like this: ⌘+Option+down arrow. That just means to press and hold the first one, press and hold the second one, and then press the third one (in this case, to mute sound in the Music application).
- » If I mention a specific message that you see on your screen, it looks like this: This message is displayed by an application.

Icons Used in This Book

Like other technology authors, I firmly believe that important nuggets of wisdom should *stand out on the page!* With that in mind, this *For Dummies* book includes margin icons for certain situations:



TIP

This icon is the most popular icon in the book. You find it parked next to suggestions I make to save you time and effort (and even cash!).



WARNING

Always read this information before you take action! I'm discussing something that could harm your hardware or throw a plumber's helper into your software.



REMEMBER

Consider these nuggets to be highlighter stuff —I use this icon to reinforce what you should remember.

Beyond the Book

Like every *For Dummies* book, this one comes with a free Cheat Sheet that brings together some of the most commonly needed information for people learning to use, in this case, Mac computers. To get the Cheat Sheet, head for www.dummies.com and enter **Macs For Seniors For Dummies Cheat Sheet** in the Search box.

Where to Go from Here

I have just a few recommendations on how to proceed from here:

- » Whether you're thinking about buying a new Mac or your new Mac is still in the box unopened in your living room, start with Part 1.
- » If you want help setting things up, start with Part 2.

- » If you already set up your Mac and you're familiar with Sequoia basics, start with Part 3.
- » If getting online and using email are your top priorities, start with Part 4. Just realize that you may need to go back through earlier chapters to set things up.
- » If you want to know how to protect your Mac from the dangers of the world or need to do some maintenance, check out Part 5.
- » For all other concerns, use the index or check out the table of contents to jump directly to the chapter you need.
- » I may update this book from time to time. If so, you can find those updates at www.dummies.com.

I want to thank you for buying this book, and I hope you find that this edition of *Macs For Seniors For Dummies* answers the questions you have along the way! With this fearless guide in hand, I believe that you and your Mac will bond as I have with mine. (That sounds somewhat wrong, but it's really not.)

Always remember this as you make your way through this book or come back to it for help: *Take your time!* Finding out how to use your computer isn't a race, and if something doesn't go quite right, don't worry. You won't break anything, there are no stupid questions, and learning new things takes practice and a little patience. You don't have to be a graphic artist, professional photographer, or video editor. With your Mac and its software by your side, you don't have to be a professional! All you "have to be" is ready to have fun and learn.

1

Buying and Setting Up Your Mac

IN THIS PART . . .

Evaluating and buying Mac computers and software

Choosing the right location for your new Mac

Turning on your Mac for the first time

Navigating your Desktop with your mouse or trackpad

Creating and changing accounts and passwords

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Know What Your Mac Can Do
- » Understand Hardware and Software
- » Choose a Desktop or Laptop
- » Assess Computing Power Needs
- » Choose a Price Range
- » Select a Monitor
- » Compare Processors, Memory, and Internal Drives
- » Decide Which Software You Want
- » Buy Online or at the Apple Store

Chapter **1**

Buying a Mac

Shopping for a Mac can leave you dazzled by a long list of features, acronyms, and assorted hoo-hah. This chapter is here to help explain what to look for and why while you shop, especially if this is your first Mac.

The best part? I wrote it in common English, with the smallest amount of technobabble possible. (That's my job!) In this chapter, you discover the tasks that your Mac can perform and the differences between hardware and software. You also find out about the various Mac models and what features and specifications to covet when shopping for a Mac.

Know What Your Mac Can Do

I would bet that you already know why you want a computer. You have an idea what you want to do with a Mac, but you may not know *all* the things you can do with a computer.

To help get you excited about owning a Mac, here's a (very) short list of only a few of the most popular uses for a computer these days. See whether any of these uses reflects what you want to do or you see any tasks that you want to learn more about:

- » **The internet:** You knew I would start with the web (home of pages like Google.com and Apple.com) and electronic mail (or email). Now you can also add online games, instant messaging (like the texts you send from your smartphone), social media (like Facebook and Instagram), shopping, banking, streaming audio (like Spotify), internet radio and video streaming (like Netflix) to the mix. The internet literally expands in front of your eyes, and your Mac can be your doorway to the online world.
- » **Digital media:** If your interest is digital media, such as photography, video, or music (making it or listening to it), you're in luck — your Mac comes with everything you need to get started.
- » **Data collection:** If genealogy is your passion — or collecting baseball cards or cataloging stamps — your Mac can help you enter, organize, and present your treasured information.
- » **Productivity stuff:** Oh, yes! You can compose documents, create spreadsheets, and build professional-looking presentations on your Mac with ease using the productivity applications that come with your Mac (which I cover in Part 3). You also can use productivity applications that you purchase separately, such as the popular Microsoft Office suite and free applications like Google Docs (both of which are available on the internet).

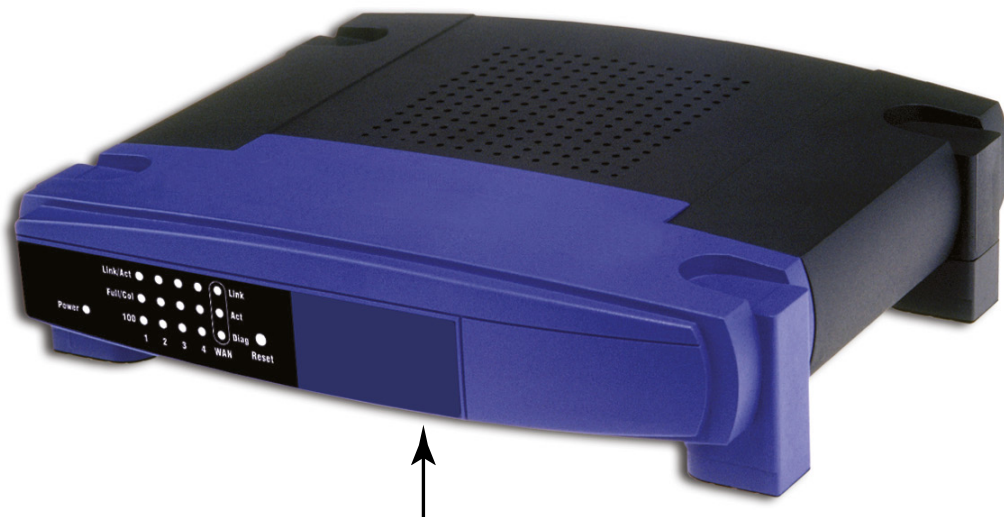
Remember, this list offers only a few high points. *The more time you invest learning about your Mac and the software that's available, the more you'll get from it.*

Understand Hardware and Software

First-time computer owners often become confused about what constitutes *hardware* and what should rightly be called *software*. It's time to clear things up!

In the computing world, *hardware* is any piece of circuitry or any component of your computer with a physical structure. Your Mac's *monitor* (the computer screen) is a piece of hardware, for example, as are your mouse or trackpad (the pointing device you use to direct your Mac's actions) and your keyboard. So are the components you normally can't see or touch (the ones buried inside the case), such as your Mac's internal drive. And even your computer's case is technically a piece of hardware, even though it's not electrical.

You can also expand your Mac with all sorts of new hardware. **Figure 1-1** illustrates a common piece of hardware you can connect to your Mac: an internet router that connects a fiber, DSL, or cable internet connection with a home network.



An internet router is a piece of hardware.

FIGURE 1-1

The other side of the computing coin is the software you use. *Software* refers to programs (also called *applications*) that you interact with onscreen. Examples include a word processing application that displays your typing and a chess program that enables you to move pieces onscreen. **Figure 1-2** shows Apple's Photos image editor, a photo editing app (or program) that helps you see and organize digital photos.

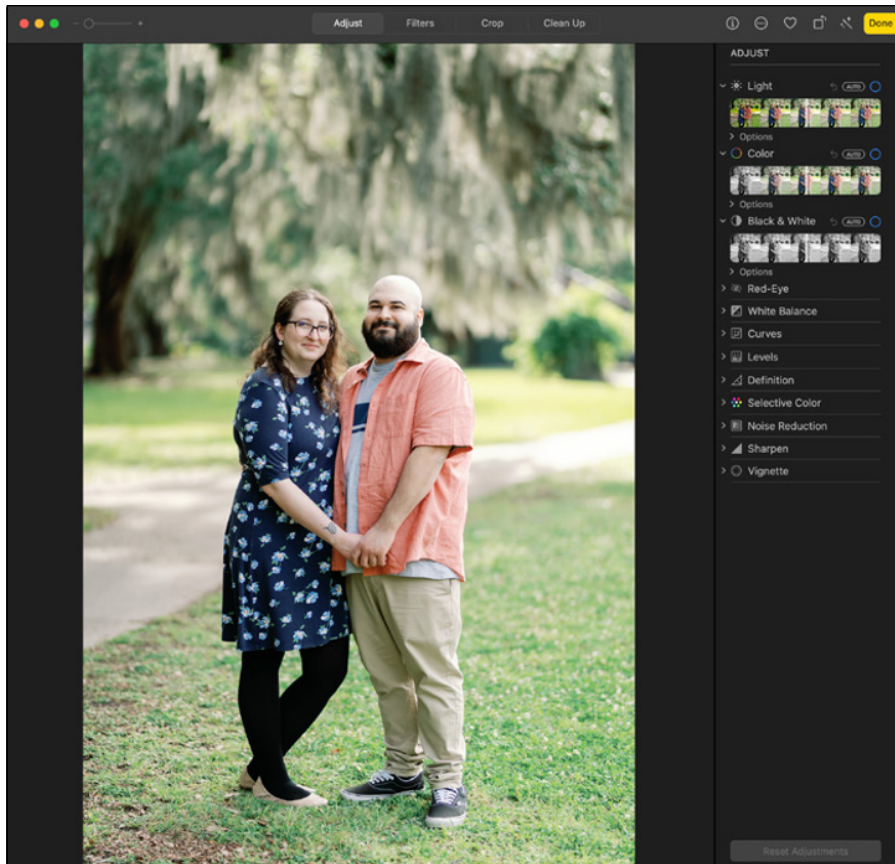


FIGURE 1-2

Essentially, computer hardware and software work together so that you can do various tasks on your computer.



When you hear folks discussing a software *upgrade*, *patch*, or *update*, they're talking about (you guessed it) *another* piece of software! However, the upgrade-patch-update program isn't designed to be run more than once; rather, its job is to apply the latest features, fixes, and data files to a piece of software that's already running on your Mac, to update it to a new *version*. (Virtually all software developers refer to successive editions of their software, such as Version 1.5 or Version 3; the higher the version, generally the more features the software includes.) In Chapter 18, you find out how to maintain your Mac with updates.

Choose a Desktop or Laptop

First, some quick definitions: A *desktop* Mac is designed to sit on your desk and uses a separate monitor, keyboard, and mouse. Examples are the iMac, Mac Studio, Mac mini, and Mac Pro.

The iMac is a special case: iMacs are “all-in-one” computers, with the monitor and computer both housed in the same case to save space. However, the keyboard and mouse still reside separately from the “picture frame” case on these computers.

On the other hand, a *laptop* Mac is portable. You can carry the whole package with you because laptops have a built-in keyboard, a trackpad (the square pointing device located on the base of the laptop, near the keyboard, that takes the place of a mouse), and an integrated monitor. MacBooks are laptop computers. Laptops are as powerful as most of the Mac desktop line, and MacBook Air and Pro models offer desktop-type features, such as high-resolution graphics, speakers and microphones, and Wi-Fi (or wireless networking).

Figure 1-3 shows the different types of Mac computers you have to choose from.

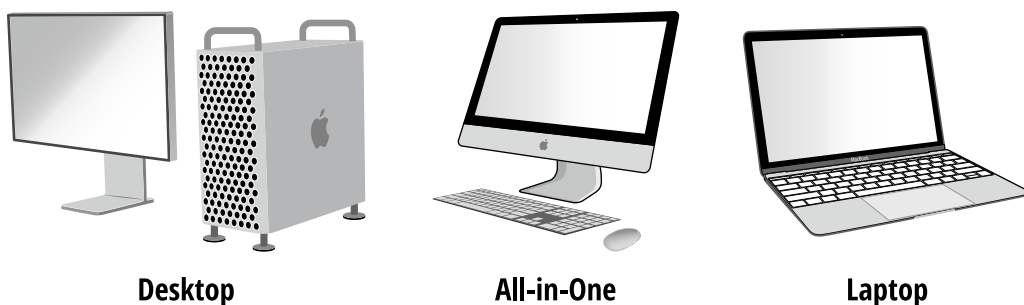


FIGURE 1-3

So should you buy a desktop or a laptop Mac? If portability is a requirement — maybe your job or your lifestyle demands travel — you want to opt for a laptop, such as a MacBook Air or MacBook Pro.

If you're sitting on the fence and portability is a lesser requirement, I generally recommend getting a Mac desktop system, for these two important reasons:

- » **MacBooks are more expensive than desktop Macs of similar capability.** My friend, you pay dearly for that portability. If you don't need it, jump to the desktop side of the fence. It's that simple.
- » **Laptops usually cost much more to repair.** All Mac computers (both desktops and laptops) require the attention of a certified Apple repair technician if an internal component breaks. However, part of the MacBook portability stems from the computer industry practice of shoehorning all hardware onto one circuit board to save space. So if one piece malfunctions, you have to take apart (and perhaps replace) the whole thing, which isn't an easy (or inexpensive) task.

Bottom line, if portability isn't important, opt for a desktop — an iMac, Mac Studio, Mac mini, or Mac Pro — depending on the processing power you need (as described in the following section) and the desk space you have available.

Know How Much Computing Power Is Too Much

Take a moment to consider which tasks your Mac will be used for — not only now but also a year or three down the road. If you plan to try your hand at any of the following tasks (either now, or in the future), feel free to label yourself a power user:

- » **High-resolution photography, audio and music production, or video editing:** If you want to edit high-resolution digital photography (images from a 48-megapixel camera, for example), record or edit professional audio, or do any type of video editing (including using the iMovie application), you need a Mac with horsepower. Think of serious professional photographers, musicians, or videographers.
- » **Running resource-hogging software:** The perfect example is Adobe Photoshop, a program you use to work with high-resolution images that demands the highest level of horsepower your Mac can deliver, along with requirements for more system memory (or RAM). Today's cutting-edge 3D games also require a powerful Mac to run well.

If the preceding points apply to you, you need a powerful Mac Studio desktop, Mac Pro desktop, or MacBook Pro laptop.



TIP

If you know the specific programs you'll be running, check the requirements for that software on the manufacturer's website or the program's packaging (typically, on the side of the box). That way, you can gain a better idea up front whether you need to invest in a more expensive, more powerful Mac Studio or MacBook Pro.

On the other hand, these activities need less computing power:

- » Surfing the web (including sites like Facebook)
- » Sending and receiving email

- » Keeping track of a large digital music library
- » Using apps such as Microsoft Word and Pages for creating documents
- » Storing and sharing digital photos and videos

If the preceding tasks are more your speed (think typical home use), any Mac in the current product line would suit you, including the significantly less expensive Mac mini or MacBook Air.



TIP

If you have a large library of digital audio and video — I’m talking many thousands of pictures or songs — you should note that some MacBook models have a relatively small amount of storage (for example, 256GB), so you’ll need an external drive to hold all that stuff. (And it never fails: You’ll take far more digital photographs than you ever did with film!)

Choose a Price Range

If you’re working on a limited budget and you want a new Mac computer (rather than searching for a used machine), your choice becomes simpler. The least expensive Mac — the Mac mini — is no pushover, and it handles the Microsoft Office and Apple productivity suite programs that I mention previously in this chapter with aplomb.



TIP

Part of the reason the Mac mini is inexpensive is that it doesn’t come with a keyboard, mouse, or monitor. (The same is true of the super-powerful Mac Studio and Mac Pro models.) Then again, if you’re lucky, you can scavenge a flat-panel monitor, keyboard, and mouse from an old computer or from a friend who has spare computer hardware on hand.

The iMac also fits into a smaller budget and comes with everything you need, including its built-in monitor. On the laptop side, the standard-issue MacBook Air provides plenty of punch for those same productivity apps.