

Phase 1: Resetting the Login Password

For M1 to M4 Silicone Macs: Resetting macOS Password & Managing Keychain

Phase 1: Resetting the Login Password

Because Apple Silicon Macs (M4, M3, M2, M1) use a secure architecture, you must use **macOS Recovery** to access the password reset tool.

1. **Shut Down:** Turn off your Mac completely.
2. **Enter Recovery:** Press and hold the **Power/Touch ID button**. Continue holding until the screen says "**Loading startup options.**"
3. **Select Options:** Click the **Options** (gear icon) and click **Continue**.
4. **Open Terminal:**
 - If you see a login screen, click "Forgot all passwords?" or look at the top menu bar.
 - Navigate to the top menu and select **Utilities > Terminal**.
5. **Run Reset Command:** In the Terminal window, type exactly: `resetpassword` and press **Enter**.
6. **Reset:** A Reset Password window will appear. Follow the prompts to:
 - Deactivate the Mac (temporary security step).
 - Enter your Apple ID if prompted.
 - Set a **new password** and hint.
7. **Restart:** Once finished, go to the Apple Menu () and select **Restart**.

Phase 2: Managing the Keychain (The "Safe")

After logging in with your new password, macOS will alert you that it cannot unlock your "login" keychain (because it is still encrypted with your **old** password).

Option A: You do NOT remember the old password

If you cannot remember the old password, you must start fresh:

1. When the pop-up appears at login, click **Create New Keychain**.
2. This clears your local saved passwords but allows the Mac to start saving new ones under your new login password.

Option B: Manual Keychain Reset

If you are already at your desktop but keep getting "Enter Keychain Password" prompts:

1. Open **Keychain Access** (use Spotlight Search: Cmd + Space).
2. Go to the top menu: **Keychain Access > Settings** (or *Preferences*).
3. Click **Reset Default Keychains**.
4. Enter your **new** login password.
5. Restart your Mac.

Phase 3: Verifying iCloud Sync (Recovering Data)

If you use iCloud, your passwords will likely download automatically from the cloud even if you reset your local keychain.

1. Open **System Settings**.
2. Click your **Name (Apple ID)** at the top left.

3. Select **iCloud**.

4. Check **Passwords & Keychain**:

- Ensure **Sync this Mac** is toggled **ON**.
- If it is off, turn it on and enter your Apple ID credentials to begin downloading your saved passwords from your iPhone/iPad.

Phase 4: Final Backup (Optional but Recommended)

To prevent future lockouts, you can export a copy of your passwords:

1. Open the **Passwords** app (found in Applications).
2. Authenticate with your new password/Touch ID.
3. Select a password, then go to **File > Export All Passwords...**
4. **Warning:** This file is unencrypted. Keep it on a secure, encrypted USB drive or in a physical safe.

Phase 5: Managing the Keychain (The "Safe")

After logging in with your new password, macOS will alert you that it cannot unlock your "login" keychain (because it is still encrypted with your **old** password).

Option A: You do NOT remember the old password

If you cannot remember the old password, you must start fresh:

1. When the pop-up appears at login, click **Create New Keychain**.
2. This clears your local saved passwords but allows the Mac to start saving new ones under your new login password.

Option B: Manual Keychain Reset

If you are already at your desktop but keep getting "Enter Keychain Password" prompts:

1. Open **Keychain Access** (use Spotlight Search: Cmd + Space).
2. Go to the top menu: **Keychain Access > Settings** (or *Preferences*).
3. Click **Reset Default Keychains**.
4. Enter your **new** login password.
5. Restart your Mac.

Phase 6: Verifying iCloud Sync (Recovering Data)

If you use iCloud, your passwords will likely download automatically from the cloud even if you reset your local keychain.

1. Open **System Settings**.
2. Click your **Name (Apple ID)** at the top left.
3. Select **iCloud**.
4. Check **Passwords & Keychain**:
 - Ensure **Sync this Mac** is toggled **ON**.
 - If it is off, turn it on and enter your Apple ID credentials to begin downloading your saved passwords from your iPhone/iPad.

Phase 7: Final Backup (Optional but Recommended)

To prevent future lockouts, you can export a copy of your passwords:

1. Open the **Passwords** app (found in Applications).
2. Authenticate with your new password/Touch ID.
3. Select a password, then go to **File > Export All Passwords...**
4. **Warning:** This file is unencrypted. Keep it on a secure, encrypted USB drive or in a physical safe.