

# screen

Enjoy this cheat sheet at its fullest within Dash, the macOS documentation browser.

## Escape key

All screen commands are prefixed by an escape key, by default `C-a` (that's Control-a, sometimes written `^a`). To send a literal `C-a` to the programs in screen, use `C-a a`. This is useful when working with screen within screen. For example `C-a a n` will move screen to a new window on the screen within screen.

## Getting in

<code>screen -S &lt;name&gt;</code>	Start a new screen session with session name
<code>screen -ls</code>	List running sessions/screens
<code>screen -x</code>	Attach to a running session
<code>screen -r &lt;name&gt;</code>	Attach to a running session with name
<code>screen -dRR</code>	The "ultimate attach" Attaches to a screen session. If the session is attached elsewhere, detaches that other display. If no session exists, creates one. If multiple sessions exist, uses the first one.

## Getting out

<code>screen -d &lt;name&gt;</code>	Detach a running session
<code>C-a d</code>	Detach
<code>C-a D D</code>	Detach and logout (quick exit)
<code>"C-a : quit"</code>	Exit screen or exit all of the programs in screen
<code>C-a C-\</code>	Force-exit screen (not recommended)

## Help

<code>C-a ?</code>	See help
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Lists keybindings. The [man page](#) is the complete reference, but it's very long.

## Window Management

`C-a c`

Create new window

`C-a C-a`

Change to last-visited active window  
(commonly used to flip-flop between two windows)

`C-a <number>`

Change to window by number  
(only for windows 0 to 9)

`C-a ' <number or title>`

Change to window by number or name

`C-a n` or `C-a <space>`

Change to next window in list

`C-a p` or `C-a <backspace>`

Change to previous window in list

`C-a "`

See window list  
(allows you to select a window to change to)

`C-a w`

Show window bar  
(if you don't have window bar)

`C-a k`

Kill current window  
(not recommended)

`C-a \`

Kill all windows  
(not recommended)

`C-a A`

Rename current window

## Split screen

`C-a S`

Split display horizontally

`C-a |`

Split display vertically  
or `C-a V` (for the vanilla vertical screen patch)

`C-a tab`

Jump to next display region

`C-a X`

Remove current region

`C-a Q`

Remove all regions but the current one

## Scripting

Send a command to a named session

```
screen -S <name> -X <command>
```

Create a new window and run ping example.com

```
screen -S <name> -X screen ping example.com
```

Stuff characters into the input buffer using bash to expand a newline character (from here)

```
screen -S <name> [-p <page>] -X stuff $('quit\r')
```

A full example

```
# run bash within screen
screen -AmdS bash_shell bash

# run top within that bash session
screen -S bash_shell -p 0 -X stuff $('top\r')

# ... some time later

# stuff 'q' to tell top to quit
screen -S bash_shell -X stuff 'q'

# stuff 'exit\n' to exit bash session
screen -S bash_shell -X stuff $('exit\r')
```

## Misc

C-a C-l

Redraw window

C-a [

Enter copy mode

or C-a <esc> (also used for viewing scrollbar buffer)

C-a ]

Paste

C-a M

Monitor window for activity

C-a \_

Monitor window for silence

C-a C-v

Enter digraph (for producing non-ascii characters)

C-a x	Lock (password protect) display
C-a :	Enter screen command
C-a H	Enable logging in the screen session

## Notes

- Based on the Quick Reference at [aperiodic](#)
- Converted by [gendalus](#)

You can modify and improve this cheat sheet [here](#)