

Terminal Cheatsheet for Mac (Basics)

Letters are shown capitalized for readability only. Capslock should be off.

SHORTCUTS

Key/Command	Description
Ctrl + A	Go to the beginning of the line you are currently typing on. This also works for most text input fields system wide. Netbeans being one exception
Ctrl + E	Go to the end of the line you are currently typing on. This also works for most text input fields system wide. Netbeans being one exception
Ctrl + L	Clears the Screen
Cmd + K	Clears the Screen
Ctrl + U	Cut everything backwards to beginning of line
Ctrl + K	Cut everything forward to end of line
Ctrl + W	Cut one word backwards using white space as delimiter
Ctrl + Y	Paste whatever was cut by the last cut command
Ctrl + H	Same as backspace

Ctrl + C	Kill whatever you are running. Also clears everything on current line
Ctrl + D	Exit the current shell when no process is running, or send EOF to a the running process
Ctrl + Z	Puts whatever you are running into a suspended background process. fg restores it
Ctrl + _	Undo the last command. (Underscore. So it's actually Ctrl + Shift + minus)
Ctrl + T	Swap the last two characters before the cursor
Ctrl + F	Move cursor one character forward
Ctrl + B	Move cursor one character backward
Option + →	Move cursor one word forward
Option + ←	Move cursor one word backward
Esc + T	Swap the last two words before the cursor
Esc + Backspace	Cut one word backwards using none alphabetic characters as delimiters
Tab	Auto-complete files and folder names

CORE COMMANDS

Key/Command	Description
cd [folder]	Change directory e.g. <code>cd Documents</code>
cd	Home directory
cd ~	Home directory
cd /	Root of drive
cd -	Previous directory
ls	Short listing
ls -l	Long listing
ls -a	Listing incl. hidden files
ls -lh	Long listing with Human readable file sizes
ls -R	Entire content of folder recursively
sudo [command]	Run command with the security privileges of the superuser (Super User DO)
open [file]	Opens a file (as if you double clicked it)
top	Displays active processes. Press q to quit
nano [file]	Opens the file using the nano editor

vim [file]	Opens the file using the vim editor
clear	Clears the screen
reset	Resets the terminal display

CHAINING COMMANDS

Key/Command	Description
[command-a]; [command-b]	Run command A and then B, regardless of success of A
[command-a] && [command-b]	Run command B if A succeeded
[command-a] [command-b]	Run command B if A failed
[command-a] &	Run command A in background

PIPING COMMANDS

Key/Command	Description
[command-a] [command-b]	Run command A and then pass the result to command B e.g ps auxwww grep google

COMMAND HISTORY

Key/Command	Description

history n	Shows the stuff typed – add a number to limit the last n items
Ctrl + r	Interactively search through previously typed commands
![value]	Execute the last command typed that starts with ‘value’
![value]:p	Print to the console the last command typed that starts with ‘value’
!!	Execute the last command typed
!!:p	Print to the console the last command typed

FILE MANAGEMENT

Key/Command	Description
touch [file]	Create a new file
pwd	Full path to working directory
.	Current folder, e.g. <code>ls .</code>
..	Parent/enclosing directory, e.g. <code>ls ..</code>
ls -l ..	Long listing of parent directory
cd ../../	Move 2 levels up
cat	Concatenate to screen

<code>rm [file]</code>	Remove a file, e.g. <code>rm data.tmp</code>
<code>rm -i [file]</code>	Remove with confirmation
<code>rm -r [dir]</code>	Remove a directory and contents
<code>rm -f [file]</code>	Force removal without confirmation
<code>cp [file] [newfile]</code>	Copy file to file
<code>cp [file] [dir]</code>	Copy file to directory
<code>mv [file] [new filename]</code>	Move/Rename, e.g. <code>mv file1.ad /tmp</code>
<code>pbcopy < [file]</code>	Copies file contents to clipboard
<code>pbpaste</code>	Paste clipboard contents
<code>pbpaste > [file]</code>	Paste clipboard contents into file, <code>pbpaste > paste-test.txt</code>

DIRECTORY MANAGEMENT

Key/Command	Description
<code>mkdir [dir]</code>	Create new directory
<code>mkdir -p [dir]/[dir]</code>	Create nested directories
<code>rmdir [dir]</code>	Remove directory (only operates on empty directories)

<code>rm -R [dir]</code>	Remove directory and contents
<code>less [file]</code>	Output file content delivered in screensize chunks
<code>[command] > [file]</code>	Push output to file, keep in mind it will get overwritten
<code>[command] >> [file]</code>	Append output to existing file
<code>[command] < [file]</code>	Tell command to read content from a file

SEARCH

Key/Command	Description
<code>find [dir] -name [search_pattern]</code>	Search for files, e.g. <code>find /Users -name "file.txt"</code>
<code>grep [search_pattern] [file]</code>	Search for all lines that contain the pattern, e.g. <code>grep "Tom" file.txt</code>
<code>grep -r [search_pattern] [dir]</code>	Recursively search in all files in specified directory for all lines that contain the pattern
<code>grep -v [search_pattern] [file]</code>	Search for all lines that do NOT contain the pattern
<code>grep -i [search_pattern] [file]</code>	Search for all lines that contain the case-insensitive pattern
<code>mdfind [search_pattern]</code>	Spotlight search for files (names, content, other metadata), e.g. <code>mdfind skateboard</code>

mdfind -onlyin [dir] -name [pattern]	Spotlight search for files named like pattern in the given directory
---	--

HELP

Key/Command	Description
[command] -h	Offers help
[command] --help	Offers help
info [command]	Offers help
man [command]	Show the help manual for [command]
whatis [command]	Gives a one-line description of [command]
apropos [search-pattern]	Searches for command with keywords in description