



This line in the Dock separates the application icons from the file, folder, and minimized window.

When you quit an application whose icon resides in the Dock (such as Safari or Mail), the blue light disappears, but the icon remains. When you quit an application whose icon doesn't reside in the Dock (for example, you just finished playing Chess), its icon disappears from the Dock.

Using Stacks and the Download Folder



Use Stacks to easily store your recent downloaded files or a collection of related documents.

Take a look at your desktop. Is it cluttered with files you downloaded or saved there (somewhat less than) temporarily? You're not alone. Everybody does it. Time to clean house with Stacks — a brand-new feature in Leopard.

Create Stacks from anything you want to access quickly from one place: a handful of documents, a group of applications, an entire folder. Files you download in Safari or save from an email are automatically directed to a Stack in the Dock, and when the download is complete, the Stack signals that a new item has arrived. When you want to see the files in a Stack, all you have to do is click — Stacks spring open from the Dock in an elegant arc for a few items, or in an at-a-glance grid for more.

Adding and Removing Docked Items

If you want to add an application, file, or folder to the Dock, just drag its icon from any Finder window (or the desktop) and drop it on the Dock; the icons in the Dock will move aside to make room for their new neighbor. The resulting icon that appears in the Dock is actually an alias of the original item (it's kind of a bridge to your original item). If you drag an application or file onto the Dock, you'll be able to open it anytime by simply clicking its docked icon. If you drag a folder onto the Dock, a Finder window of the folder's contents will display when you click the folder icon in the Dock.



To get rid of any unwanted item, just drag its icon off the Dock.

Of course, you can also remove stuff from the Dock. To remove an item from the Dock, just drag its icon off the Dock onto the desktop; the icon will disappear in a poof of smoke. Don't worry, you didn't permanently remove the item from your computer; you simply got rid of its alias. If you want that item back, you can easily locate the application, file, or folder in the Finder, and drag its icon back into the Dock. Keep in mind that there are a couple things that you won't be able to remove; namely, the Trash and the Finder.

Tip: You can change where the Dock displays and customize its animated behavior in Dock Preferences. You can learn how to do both in "Customize the Dock."

Emptying Trash

Sure, your Mac has a big enough hard drive to keep just about any pack rat happy, but you shouldn't get into the mindset of not throwing anything away. When you need to delete unwanted files, folders, or applications, move them to the Trash.



Here's what the Trash looks like when it's empty (left) and when it's got something in it (right).

The Trash functions somewhat like a folder in that you can drag things to it and then open it to see what's inside. However, when you command the Trash to empty itself, you can kiss its contents goodbye. To get rid of unwanted items, simply drag the item from the Finder and drop it onto the Trash icon in the Dock. The item will remain in the Trash folder (click the Trash icon to view its contents) until you either move it out of the Trash (if you decide to keep it) or empty it. From the **Finder** menu, choose **Empty Trash**.

If you're dumping sensitive files, such as electronic banking statements, documents that contain social security numbers or private passwords, or drunken photos of yourself at the company party, you can choose to have your Mac securely dump the Trash: From the **Finder** menu, choose **Secure Empty Trash**. This makes your Mac write over your deleted files with meaningless data, greatly reducing the chances it could ever be recovered. Keep in mind that this process can take some time, depending on what you're deleting. If you've got a lot of files to "shred," put it in motion and then go grab a snack, take a nap, or get some exercise and come back to it later.

[↑ Take me to the Grand Tour index](#)

[Take me to Lesson 5: Applications, Files, and Folders -](#)