



10 Hacks Every Apple Mail User Should Know

Apple's underrated Mail app is hiding some cool tricks in plain sight.



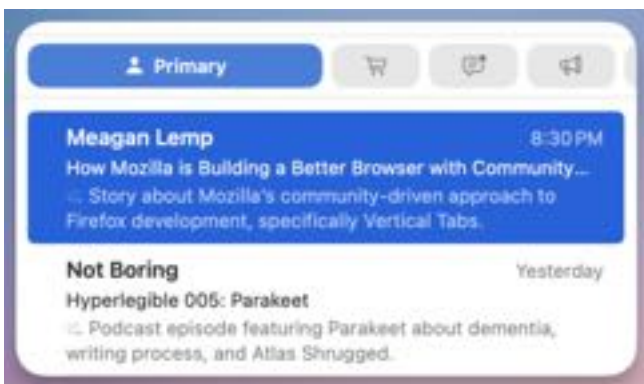
Credit: René Ramos/Lifehacker Composite/Adobe Stock

Because the Mail app is built into all Macs, iPhones, and iPads, it becomes the default choice for many Apple users. For some, the simple interface is the biggest attraction, but that doesn't mean the Mail app is a simple piece of software. After decades of active development, Mail is full of powerful hidden features that are lurking just below the surface. These Apple Mail hacks can help you manage and organize your email—and hopefully reduce the stress that comes along with it.

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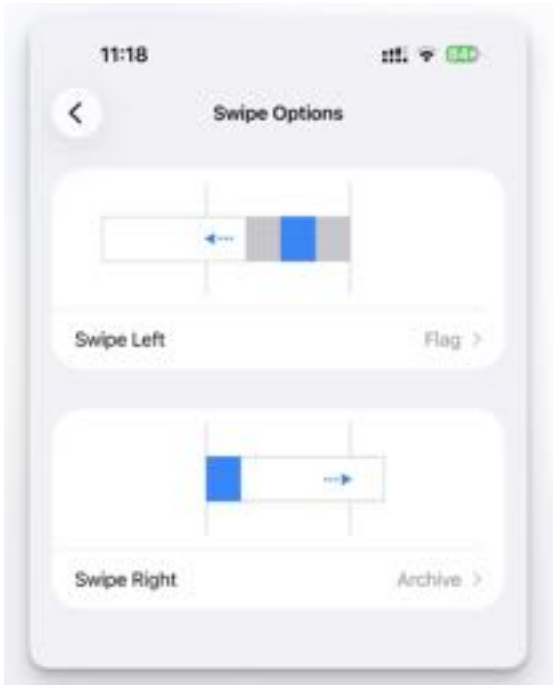
Disable "categories" to restore Mail's original design



Apple Mail automatically categorizes emails into categories like Primary, Transactions, Updates, and Promotions. Most of the time, Apple does a good job at this. But if you're used to the old Mail interface, shifting to these new categories can be jarring. Luckily, you can bring back the simplified interface at any time: Swipe to the end of the Category Page 1

tabs to view the **All Mail** tab, which shows all your emails on one page. You can also disable the Categories view entirely. Tap the three dots at the top and switch to **List View**. On the Mac, click the three-dotted **Menu** button from the top toolbar and unselect **Show Mail Categories**.

Use custom swipe gestures to build routines for clearing your inbox



Credit: Khamosh Pathak

Swipe gestures are a lifesaver in the Mail app. You can swipe left or right on any email to reveal quick actions like setting a reminder, marking the email as read, or archiving the email. You can swipe once to reveal all options, and follow through on that swipe to trigger the main action. Best of all, you can customize this main action, so your full swipe doesn't have to trigger Apple's default action. Go to **Settings > Mail > Swipe Options**. Here, you'll see **Swipe Left** and **Swipe Right** options. For each, you can choose between "Mark as Read," "Flag," "Move Message," and "Archive." If you heavily rely on a Flag and Archive method, use the left swipe gesture to Flag an email, and the right swipe gesture to Archive it. But you can configure these however you'd like.

Use "Remind Me" and "Mute" to deprioritize threads that you can't respond to yet



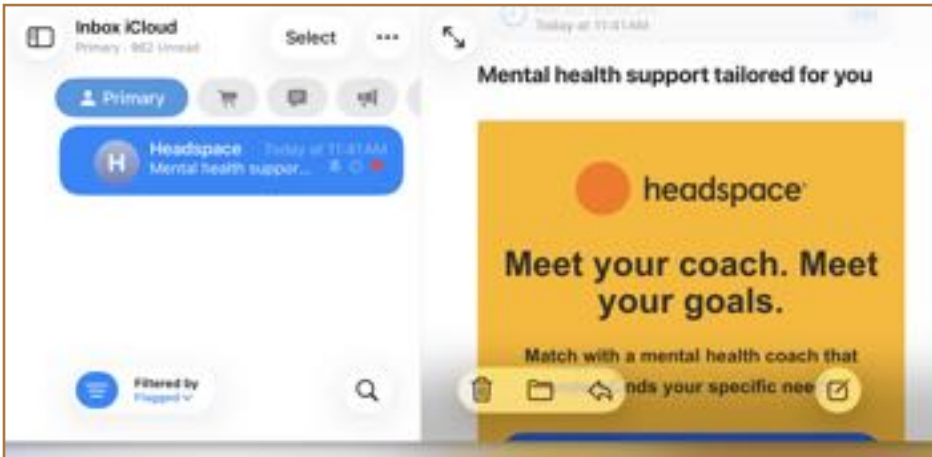
Credit: Khamosh Pathak

Not all email is important—at least, not right this moment. If you want some peace while you deal with the important stuff, use the "Remind Me" feature to push off some emails into the future. When you're viewing an email, tap the **Reply** button, and choose the **Remind Me** option. Then choose the reminder time from the following: "one hour", "in the evening," "the next day," or a custom time. You can also swipe right when in the Inbox to access the Remind Me feature.

Similarly, a long email thread that doesn't really concern you can get annoying. You can use the Mute feature to mute alerts from overactive threads. Press and hold an email thread from the inbox and choose the **Mute** option.

(In the email view, you can find it under the **Reply** feature.) On the Mac, right-click on any email, and choose the **Remind Me** option.

Use Filters and Flags to prioritize your important conversations

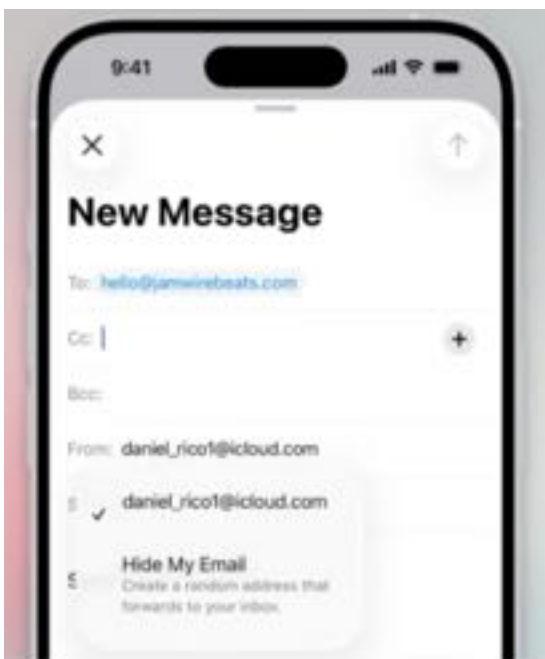


Credit: Khamosh Pathak

When it comes to focusing on the important emails, combining Flags with Filters can really help. The Mail app lets you flag emails based on importance, including with custom colors. Each day, you can flag important emails in the morning and then filter out the rest to focus on the crucial tasks. You'll find the Flag option under the Reply menu in any

email. Then, when you're in the inbox, tap the **Filter** icon in the bottom-left, choose the **Filtered By:** button, and switch to "Flagged." Now, the only emails you'll see in your inbox will be your flagged emails. On your Mac, you'll find the **Flag** icon in the top toolbar. To only see emails flagged with a particular color, go to the **Flagged** section in the sidebar, and choose the flag you wish to filter.

Use "Hide My Email" to protect your address



Credit: Apple

If you pay for iCloud+, you can use Hide My Email to create as many unique email aliases as you want. These aliases all forward back to your actual email address. That way, you can share the unique address with a new company, without having to expose your actual address. You can manage and create all your email addresses from **Settings** on your iPhone and **System Settings** on your Mac. Click on your name up top and go to **iCloud > iCloud+ Features > Hide My Email**. The easiest way to use this, though, is in the email compose window. When you're drafting an email from your iPhone, iPad, or Mac, choose the "From" button and select **Hide My Email**, which will quickly generate a new address to send the message from.

Set up Undo Send to buy yourself time to catch mistakes



Credit: Khamosh Pathak

Typos in emails are an inevitability. Instead of panicking or sending a follow-up email, plan ahead using Undo Send. Go to **Settings > Apps > Mail > Undo Send Delay** and adjust the option to as high as 30 seconds. Now, every email you send will be delayed by 30 seconds, which gives you plenty of time to stop it from flying off. On your Mac, you'll find this option in **Mail Settings > Composing > Undo Send Delay**.

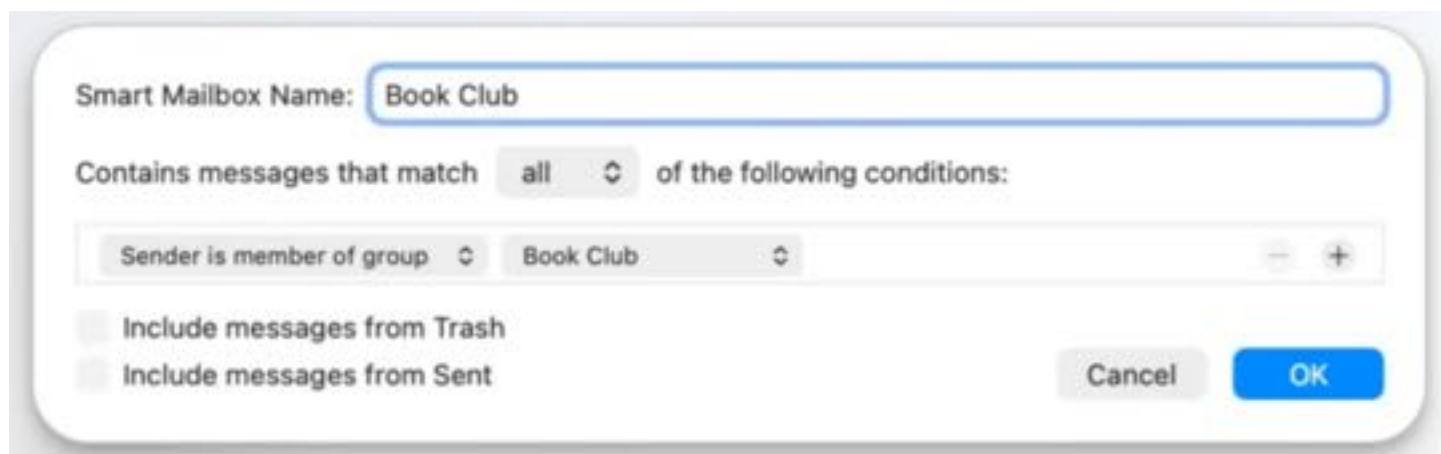
What do you think so far?

Use these keyboard shortcuts to move faster across the Mail app

On your Mac (or iPad with a keyboard), you can move through your inbox and pending emails much faster if you embrace keyboard shortcuts. Here are a few beginner-friendly keyboard shortcuts to start with:

- Create a new email message: **Command + N**
- Reply to selected email: **Command + R**
- Forward selected email: **Shift + Command + F**
- Mark email as read or unread: **Shift + Command + U**
- Move selected emails to the Junk mailbox: **Shift + Command + J**
- Archive the email: **Control + Command + A**

Use smart mailboxes to automatically sort specific types of messages into one inbox (Mac only)



Credit: Apple

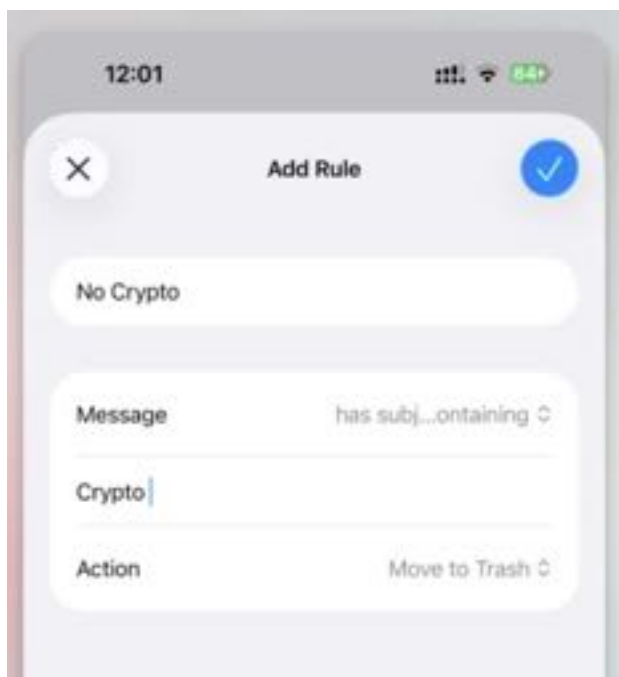
If you use the Mail app as your default email client, you should try setting up some smart mailboxes. A smart mailbox helps you automatically sort incoming emails based on pre-configured parameters. You can set up a mailbox to receive all emails from a particular client or about a project across different mail servers.

To start, go to Mail's sidebar, then click the folder icon next to "Smart Mailboxes" to create one. Give it a name, then set up conditions for filtering. For example, the first condition can filter based on email addresses, while the second can filter based on your project's keywords. Click "OK" to save it. You'll now see the new smart mailbox in the sidebar, containing only the emails based on your conditions.

Use "VIPs" to never miss emails from important contacts

If you suffer from email overload, you might have turned off notifications for the Mail app a long time ago. While checking your inbox every now and then keeps you in the loop for the most part, there may be times when you need to get to an email the moment it arrives. That's where Mail's VIP feature comes in handy. When you get an email from a VIP, you'll get a notification, without having to receive alerts for other emails. (Just note: You will need to turn Mail's notifications on, but you can disable alerts for all accounts to limit notifications to VIPs.) To get started, open the Contact Card for the person in question and tap "Add to VIP." Next, go to **Settings > Notifications > Mail > Customize Notifications > VIP** and make sure that alerts and sounds are enabled. On your Mac, right-click a contact's name and choose **Add to VIPs**.

Set up rules to ensure spam and unwanted emails never reach you



If you use your iCloud email address, you can set up rules for your mailbox that automatically hide emails that match certain criteria. That could be an email address you know to be a scammer, or spammy keywords that tend to appear in the subject line. For instance, you can set up a rule that automatically removes all incoming emails containing the words "crypto" or "bitcoin." To set this up, go to **Settings > [Your Name] > iCloud > iCloud Mail > iCloud Mail Rules**, then tap **Add Rule** and fill in your criteria. You don't have to move the emails to trash, either. You can also use this feature to automatically move emails to a certain mailbox, or to mark them as read.

Credit: Khamosh Pathak