

Newsletter



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Five unexpected uses for the Esc key

Bail out of all sorts of situations with this one versatile key

by [Sharon Zardetto](#), [Macworld.com](#)

The Esc key has long been the “get me outta here” panacea for many things: canceling a dialog box, getting rid of a button-less splash screen, closing a menu that you clicked open. (Esc is, after all, short for “escape.”) But those are only the obvious things. Here’s a handful of less-than-obvious but just-as-handy solutions the Esc key provides.

1. Take a shortcut back to your original application

You press Command-Tab to switch to another application, pressing Tab several times (or just holding it down) because you’re moving to a program that’s far away on the Application Switcher’s bar. You get halfway across the line of program icons and realize—whoops!—you forgot to copy the material that you wanted to bring with you. Use the awkward Command-Shift-Tab to move backwards? Use the more convenient Command-tilde (~), still pressing the

key repeatedly? No! While the Command key is still down, press Esc to return to the program you were working in before the premature press of Command-Tab.

2. Erase and get out of the Spotlight menu

If you want to erase what you've typed in the Spotlight search field, you don't have to tediously delete it a character at a time: press Esc to instantly wipe the field clean so you can start again. The Spotlight menu stores what you last typed in it unless you erase it so that you can make a second choice from the results list. If your search was fruitless—or mistaken—it's a good idea to erase the contents of the field before you close the menu so you can start fresh on a new search. Press Esc twice: once to erase the field, and a second time to close it.

3. Hide your browser cursor

For a relatively tiny thing, the mouse cursor can be an annoying distraction when it happens to be in the wrong spot on your screen while you're viewing a Web page. It's like a fly landing on your TV screen. Whether you're in Apple's [Safari](#) or Mozilla [Firefox](#), press Esc and the cursor disappears instantly, cooperatively reappearing as soon as you move the mouse.

4. Reverse your “make this tab a window” drag

I'm a tab junkie in Safari: a window just looks wrong without a half-dozen tabs (each containing a separate Web page) arrayed across its top. But when dragging a tab off the bar to create a separate window (and a new tab colony), it's easy grab the wrong one and take it off the tab bar before you realize the mistake. You don't have to drag a nascent window back into the bar: press Esc before you let it go, and it snaps back into its original tab position. This trick works in Firefox, too, as well as in other programs that provide tear-off tabbed windows, such as Adobe's [Photoshop CS4](#) and [InDesign CS4](#).



If you change your mind when dragging a tab off the bar to make a Safari window, press Esc before you let go to send the new window back into its tab

5. Switch to InDesign's selection tool from within a text box

This is currently my favorite Esc key trick because it triggers a feature I've wanted desperately for a long time and didn't realize until recently was already available. In InDesign, a press of a single key selects a tool: V for the selection arrow, T for the text tool, and so on. This one-key access is great—except when you forget you're in a text box and hit V or T or some other tool shortcut and you type the letter instead of get the tool. I just want switch to the selection tool with a single key, without having to deselect the text first (and not

just temporarily, as with the Command key). As it turns out, I can: Esc deactivates the text box you're in and activates the Selection tool.

Free "Take Control of VMware Fusion 3" Simplifies Windows on a Mac

by Adam C. Engst <ace@tidbits.com>
article link: <<http://db.tidbits.com/article/10692>>
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Thanks to sponsorship from VMware, we are pleased to provide Joe Kissell's new "Take Control of VMware Fusion 3" for free. In Fusion 3, VMware added 64-bit optimization for Snow Leopard users, Windows 7 support, a simplified process for porting a physical Windows installation to a virtual Mac installation, and better support for graphically intense applications.

<<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/vmware-fusion-3>>

Joe covers all this, plus walks readers step-by-step through many possibilities for installing Windows on a Mac, the best ways to configure Fusion, techniques for working effectively in Windows with Mac hardware, and much more.

To help readers further explore the Take Control series, "Take Control of VMware Fusion 3" also comes with a coupon code worth 50 percent off one ebook order.

Print copies of "Take Control of VMware Fusion 3" are also available for \$12.99.

If you'd like an idea of what's involved in running Windows on your Mac with Fusion (or even more generally), we published a slightly edited excerpt that explains the topic over on the Take Control site.

<<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/news/free-take-control-of-vmware-fusion-3-simplifies-running-windows-on-a-mac>>

Software Updates

VMware Fusion™ - 3.0

NeoOffice - 3.0.1

Freeway 5 Pro - 5.4.2 Update
 iTunes - 9.0.2
 NeoOffice - 3.0.1
 Opera - 10.0.1
 Apple OS - 10.6.2
 Office 2004 - 11.5.6 Update
 Safari - 4.0.4

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