

Use Mail Rules with Apple Mail

Cove Apple Club — January 11, 2023

You can use the power of Apple's supercomputer mail servers to help you wrangle your incoming mail with Mail Rules.

Mail Rules are simple rules you set up that run on Apple's mail servers, and act on your mail messages **before** they are ever delivered to your devices.

With Mail Rules, you can:

- Delete incoming mail from known spammers who won't let you unsubscribe
- File messages automatically based on Subject line, Sender, message contents, date/time received, recipient, and many more
- Flag messages, make a sound, automatically create a reply message, and much more

Instructions in this HOWTO apply to Apple's Mail apps and iCloud mail **ONLY**.

If you're using Gmail, Yahoo! Mail, AOL Mail, PhoneCo/CableCo Mail, or any other "free" email provider, then:

(A) **Don't.** Get off it, and switch to a PAID email provider who actually treats you as a customer, and not the product they are selling. Ask Mike how you can do it, easily and quickly.

(B) None of this will work for you, most likely.

Mail Rules are different than Smart Mailboxes, which will be covered in another topic.

To set up Mail Rules on your Mac (valid for macOS 13.1 Ventura & Mail 16.0):

1. Open Mail
 1. (Optional) To create a new rule to act on a specific message or a group of messages, first select the message or messages in the Mail sidebar. Hold the Cmd key to select a discontinuous set of messages, or the Shift key to select an adjacent set of messages
2. From the Mail menu, choose Settings
3. In the Settings panel, click on the Rules tab on the toolbar
4. In the Rules tab, click Add Rule to create your first rule
 1. In the Description field, give your new rule an appropriate name
 2. Use the drop-down selectors and text fields to craft the rule to do what you want
 3. For help creating rules, click the "?" icon in the lower-left of the Add Rules dialog box
5. When you're done crafting the new rule, click OK
6. Choose whether to apply your new rule to the currently-selected messages, if any, from Step 1.1.
7. To apply your new rule to existing messages, first select the messages in the sidebar as explained in Step 1.1, then choose Apple Rules from the Messages menu

To set up Mail Rules on your iPhone, iPad or from the web (valid for iOS 16.2 or later):

Note: You can create Rules on your iPad or iPhone, but they will be much more limited than Rules you can create in the Mail app on Mac or on [iCloud.com](https://www.icloud.com) on a desktop web browser

1. Open Safari
2. In Safari, go to [iCloud.com](https://www.icloud.com) and sign into your iCloud account using your Apple ID and password
3. If needed, scroll to see the set of icons for the iCloud services, then tap Mail
4. After Mail loads, tap Mailboxes below the iCloud Mail heading to return to the top-level of your Mailboxes
5. Tap the small blue “gear” icon, then tap Preferences...
6. In Preferences, tap Rules
7. Tap Add Rule to add your first rule
 1. Use the drop-down selectors and text fields to craft the rule to do what you want
 2. Tap Add when you have crafted the rule criteria you choose
8. The new rule is added to your list of rules
9. To delete a rule, tap the “hamburger” icon on the left side of the rule in the Rules list, then tap Delete

To read more about Mail Rules, see these Apple Support articles, or click on Help in the menubar of the Mail app on your Mac, then type in Rules to the search box and press Enter.

Use Rules to manage emails you receive in Mail on Mac:

<https://support.apple.com/en-gb/guide/mail/mlhlp1017/15.0/mac/13.1>

Set up rules to filter email in Mail on iCloud.com

<https://support.apple.com/en-gb/guide/icloud/mm6b1a3f8a/icloud>