

What the F Keys Do on Mac Keyboards

These are the primary defaults of what function keys do on an Apple keyboard when connected to a Mac:

- **F1 – Decrease display brightness**
- **F2 – Increase display brightness**
- **F3 – Open Mission Control**
- **F4 – Open Launchpad**
- **F5 – Decrease keyboard brightness (On compatible notebooks only)**
- **F6 – Increase keyboard brightness (On compatible notebooks only)**
- **F7 – Skip back (Audio)**
- **F8 – Pause / Play (Audio)**
- **F9 – Skip forward (Audio)**
- **F10 – Mute**
- **F11 – Volume down**
- **F12 – Volume Up**


Pressing a function key will invoke its secondary function by default.

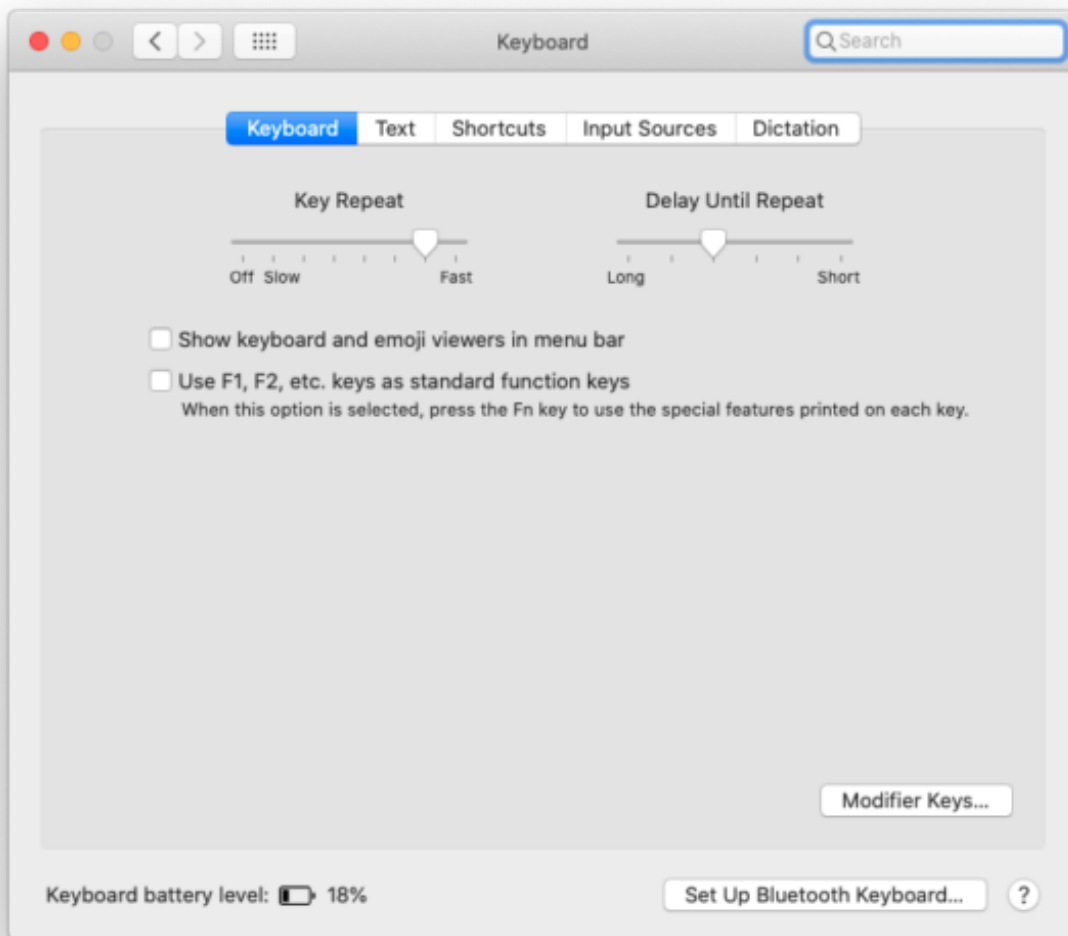
To use the Fx keys as standard function keys, press and hold the Fn button and then press the required function key.

If you're using a non-Apple keyboard that doesn't have an Fn key, try pressing and holding the Control key instead.

Changing Function Key Behavior on Mac

You can change the default behavior of the function keys on Mac too, however. This basically inverts their function away from defaulting to things like brightness and audio controls to standard F keys.

1. Open System Preferences from the  Apple menu
2. Click "Keyboard" from system preferences
3. Select "Use F1, F2, etc. keys as standard function keys" to make the change.



If you make this change, you'll need to press down the "FN" key on the keyboard and then press the F1, F2, F3, etc keys to perform the action that is on the keys icon (for example, changing brightness, or muting system volume). Some users on older Macs in particular prefer this, as we covered [previously](#) some time ago.