



TAKE CONTROL OF

Calendar AND Reminders

COVERS
macOS ⚡ iOS
iPadOS ⚡ watchOS

by **GLENN FLEISHMAN**

\$14.99

**6TH
EDITION**

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Read Me First

Welcome to *Take Control of Calendar and Reminders, Sixth Edition*, version 6.1, published in October 2025 by alt concepts. This book was written by Glenn Fleishman and edited by Joe Kissell. Scholle Sawyer McFarland wrote the first three editions of this book.

This book teaches you basic techniques and special tips for keeping yourself on time and on track with Apple’s Calendar and Reminders apps for Mac, iPhone, and iPad.

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Updates and More

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How to Activate Siri

Siri is often the fastest way to work with Apple's Calendar and Reminders apps. You'll see tips about when to use Siri and what to say throughout this book. (Siri always requires an internet connection.) Here's a quick look at how to get Siri working.

Siri changed considerably with the introduction of Apple Intelligence starting in iOS 18.1/iPadOS 18.1 and macOS 15.1 Sequoia on supported models. See [Apple Intelligence](#), below.

On devices not yet updated beyond iOS 18.0/iPadOS 18.0 or macOS 15.0 Sequoia or that cannot use Apple Intelligence, the Settings (iPhone/iPad) and System Settings (Mac) location of Siri remains Siri & Spotlight. On those updated to the latest release on capable devices, look to Settings/System Settings > Apple Intelligence & Siri.

Siri also looks different with Apple Intelligence active. Instead of showing a swirling icon on an iPhone or iPad, the four edges of the screen lightly strobe with multi-colored hues. On a Mac, a rainbow-tinged field appears in the upper-right corner, where you type or talk.

Details below apply to macOS 14 Sonoma and later, iOS 17/iPadOS 17 and later, and watchOS 10 and later.

Mac

Make sure Siri is enabled and set up the keyboard shortcut or menu bar icon to invoke Siri in one or both ways. First, find the Siri setting:

- **With Apple Intelligence:** Go to System Settings > Apple Intelligence & Siri and enable Siri.
- **In macOS 15 Sequoia or later without Apple Intelligence:** Go to System Settings > Siri and enable Siri.
- **In macOS 14 Sonoma:** Go to System Settings > Siri & Spotlight and enable Ask Siri.

Select the shortcut from the “Keyboard shortcut” popup menu. To enable the menu bar icon:

- **In macOS 16 Tahoe:** Go to System Settings > Menu Bar and enable Siri.
- **In Sequoia or earlier:** Go to System Settings > Control Center and choose Show in Menu Bar from the Siri menu.

Depending on which option or options you enabled, you can click the Siri  or  icon on the menu bar, or press and hold -Space or another keyboard shortcut you set.

Warning! If you set ⌘-Space as your Siri shortcut and you hold ⌘ and then *tap* the Space key, you’ll activate Spotlight instead.

The Siri field (Apple Intelligence, Sequoia or Tahoe) or window (Sonoma) appears in the upper-right corner of your screen. When Siri is listening, an orb pulses and turns in this window—if you don’t see this, click the Siri icon at the bottom of the window. Speak your command.

iPhone or iPad

On an iPad or iPhone, press and hold the Home button or side button to activate Siri manually. If voice activation has been turned on, just say “Siri” or “Hey Siri” before your request.

Tip: To enable voice activation, go to Settings > Apple Intelligence & Siri > Talk & Type to Siri or Settings > Siri & Search and tap “Listen for,” where you can then choose “Siri” or “Hey Siri,” or just “Hey Siri.”

Apple Watch

Press and hold the Digital Crown, or raise your wrist and say “Hey Siri.”

HomePod or HomePod mini

Press the top of the speaker until you see the swirling, multicolor lights and make your request or say “Hey Siri” followed by your command.

To use Calendar and Reminders on the HomePod, you must first turn on Personal Requests. See [Apple's support document](#).

Apple Intelligence

As noted above, Apple Intelligence was added in iOS 18.1/iPadOS 18.1 and macOS 15.1 Sequoia, and is available on these models and series:

- **iPhone:** iPhone 15 Pro and Pro Plus, iPhone 16 series, iPhone 17 series, and iPhone Air
- **iPad:** Any iPad Air or iPad Pro with an M1 or later chip
- **Mac:** Any Apple silicon Mac (i.e., M1 or later)

Go to System Settings/Settings > Apple Intelligence & Siri to enable Apple Intelligence and gain access to a few features noted in the appropriate places in this book.

Visual Intelligence, which can capture calendar details, requires not just Apple Intelligence, but also one of these iPhone models: iPhone 15 Pro or Pro Plus, iPhone series 16, iPhone series 17, or iPhone Air.

What's New in Version 6.1

After enormous changes in the previous releases of Apple's major operating systems, the company took a deep breath on Calendar and Reminders with the release of iOS 26, iPadOS 26, macOS 26 Tahoe, and watchOS 26.

Note: Apple has shifted to employing the same version number across all their platforms, using the last two digits of the year following the release year.

Apple focused on interface changes this time around:

- **Liquid Glass:** Apple's new unified interface design has meant item locations have moved and some descriptions required updating.

Because this book is intended to cover the last three releases, I have added information for the newest operating system updates throughout the book as needed, and updated some screenshots where it's useful for your clarity.

- **iPad windows and menus:** With iPadOS 26, Apple has created a true multitasking, windows, and menu environment for iPad users that resembles the Mac. Because of Apple's responsive-design principles, resizing a Calendar or Reminders window on an iPad may have it transform the app into a size and exhibit features exactly the same as the iPhone version. Some descriptions in the book have been updated where it's useful to call that out or to describe additional options on an iPad. In particular, see [Go Full Screen on a Mac or in iPadOS 26](#).

Apple has no documented new features for Calendar.

Here's what's new in Reminders since the last update:

- **Auto-Categorize:** With Apple Intelligence, you can have Reminders add categories to your items. See [Recognize Events Using Visual Intelligence](#).
- **Suggested reminders:** If you share from other apps to Reminders, Apple Intelligence recommends to-do items, follow-ups, and grocery items. See [Use the Share Icon to Add Reminders](#).
- **Spotlight:** You can now create reminders in the expanded Spotlight set of options. See [Add a Reminder](#).
- **Time zones:** Reminders can now have a time zone set, just like calendar events. See [Set a Date and Time](#).
- **Visual Intelligence:** The Visual Intelligence feature (requiring certain iPhone models and Apple Intelligence) lets you add calendar events from things around you, like flyers. See [Recognize Events Using Visual Intelligence](#).

What Was New in the Sixth Edition

This edition reflected changes and new features made in iOS 18, iPadOS 18, macOS 15 Sequoia, and watchOS 11, released in September 2024. These changes included:

- **Reminders in Calendar:** Deserving a true *finally*, reminders now appear in the Calendar app. You can also create and edit them there without a Reminders app round-trip. This integration is described throughout the book, though see [Tap into Special Calendars](#) for how the Reminders “calendar” appears and [Add a Reminder in the Calendars App](#) for details on how to do that.
- **Multi Day view plus new Month view options in Calendar for iPhone:** iPhones and Macs offer similar views, but iPhones are constrained by their proportions. iOS 18 adds the Multi Day view between Day and Week; see [Multi Day View](#). Apple also revamped iPhone’s Month view, offering so many options it requires its own section; see [Customize Month View on an iPhone](#).
- **Stop pinching! Or start, rather:** Apple lets you use two fingers to pinch or expand vertically in Day, Multi Day, Week, and Month views on an iPhone or iPad. See those view entries in [Meet Calendar](#).
- **Design refresh in Calendar:** Apple updated the visual appearance of Calendar, and all screen captures throughout the book now reflect the latest updates. Notably, there’s an icon in every event and task in Day, Multi Day, and Week (all platforms) and every all-day event and task in Month view (Mac and iPad).
- **Subtasks in Reminders:** The Reminders app now reveals subtasks in standard lists, making those items more readily viewable. See [Create Subtasks](#). This edition also more consistently refers to these tasks as *subtasks*, instead of by different descriptors.
- **Deleted Reminders are recoverable:** At long last, Apple added a Recently Deleted list to Reminders, in which you can see deleted items for 30 days after you removed them. See [Restore a Reminder](#).

- **Apple Intelligence:** Apple Intelligence shipped in iOS 18.1/iPadOS 18.1 and macOS 15.1 Sequoia. The feature adds machine-learning features throughout the operating system, few of which don't affect calendars or reminders. See, in particular, [Set Up Notifications](#).
- **Siri changes:** Using Siri and its settings locations are slightly different in the latest operating system updates—both the major release of iOS 18/iPadOS 18 and Sequoia and the minor one for Apple Intelligence. See [How to Activate Siri](#), just above, and changes throughout the book.

Introduction

Tired of a calendar that's as jumbled as your life feels? Having trouble keeping up with your to-do list? Apple includes two apps, Calendar and Reminders, that can help you stay on time and on track.

In this book, I look at how you can bring order to these apps and figure out which features fit the way you work. You'll learn the nitty-gritty about which tasks each app excels at, how best to set them up, and the quickest ways to add calendar events and reminders (spoiler alert—it's often Siri!). You'll also learn about features you may not have heard of before, for instance that you can use Reminders to jog your memory about something when you reach a certain location or that Calendar can trigger an Automator workflow or open a file at the time and date you choose.

If you have a Mac available, I recommend that you rely it to do the heavy lifting of setting up the Calendar and Reminders apps. Though the mobile versions of those apps are good—and sometimes better—you can only see so much on a screen, particularly with an iPhone, and territory can be useful with both events and reminders. You can also optionally use Calendar and Reminders on the [iCloud website](#). If you have any Apple hardware, iCloud.com is the worst choice, so I don't go into depth on the web apps—and, fortunately, they mostly work like their Mac counterparts.

It's time to get organized!

Apple Operating Systems Covered

This edition of the book largely focuses on the 2024 and later versions of the major operating systems: iOS 18 and 26, iPadOS 18 and 26, macOS 15 Sequoia and 26 Tahoe, and watchOS 11 and 26. However, for those still using some older operating systems, I include information where useful dating back one further release, to iOS 17, iPadOS 17, macOS 14 Sonoma, and watchOS 10.

Calendar and Reminders

Quick Start

You can read this book in whatever order suits your fancy, but I'd encourage you to start with [Calendar vs. Reminders](#) to get a good idea of what each app does best. The list below shows the book's main topics. Click any link to jump to that topic.

Get started with Calendar:

- Get the lay of the land and learn about Day, Multi Day, Week, Month, and Year views in [Meet Calendar](#).
- Learn how to connect Calendar to iCloud and other accounts, create and color-code new calendars, and customize everything from how many days show to how time zones are handled in [Set Up Calendar](#).

Set up your schedule:

- In [Work with Events](#), you'll discover all the ways you can add an event as well as what information it can include. You'll see how to make events repeat at regular intervals or custom schedules like on the last Monday of the month. I also discuss how to reschedule and delete events.
- You'll never forget an event again after you delve into the nitty gritty of how to [Set Up Notifications](#) and how to [Set Up Calendar Alerts](#).

Start sharing:

- Learn how to [Invite People to Events](#), so you can keep track of who's coming. Make it possible for a group to view and edit a calendar together in [Share & Subscribe to Calendars](#) as well as how to create or subscribe to a read-only calendar.

Get started with Reminders:

- Go past the deceptively simple exterior of this app in [Set Up Reminders](#). Learn the basics of creating, managing, and sharing lists in Manage Lists.
- In [Work with Reminders](#), I look at how to make and manage reminders (including how to assign a reminder to someone and check them off when a deed is done), as well as how to set up alarms at a certain time or a certain place.

Go beyond the basics:

- See how to solve common Calendar and Reminders conundrums in Troubleshoot Problems. Learn the quickest way to share calendars with family members in [Share a Family Calendar](#).

Calendar vs. Reminders

Calendar and Reminders both help you organize your life, but not everyone is clear about when to use which. The first step in this book, then, is learning which tool is best for the job at hand.

Calendar

The basic unit of the Calendar app is an *event*: a unique entry that can occur once or repeatedly, cover an entire day (like a birthday or holiday) or multiple days, or happen during a range of time. A calendar event can link to an email message with relevant information or contain the responses to invitation you sent to others. Best of all, Calendar can remind you about your commitments with alarms.

Use Calendar to:

- See an overview of your day, week, or month (**Figure 1**).
- Track your daily schedule.
- Invite others to meetings.
- Accept or decline invitations to meetings.
- Share a calendar with colleagues or family members.
- Subscribe to others' calendars, for example, your school district or favorite sports team's schedule.
- Link to URLs, files, or a relevant email to make it easier to prepare for a meeting.
- Enter event locations so you can get directions when you need them from Maps.
- Set alarms to ensure you're not late.

- View, edit, and add reminders (starting in iOS 18/iPadOS 18 and macOS 15 Sequoia).

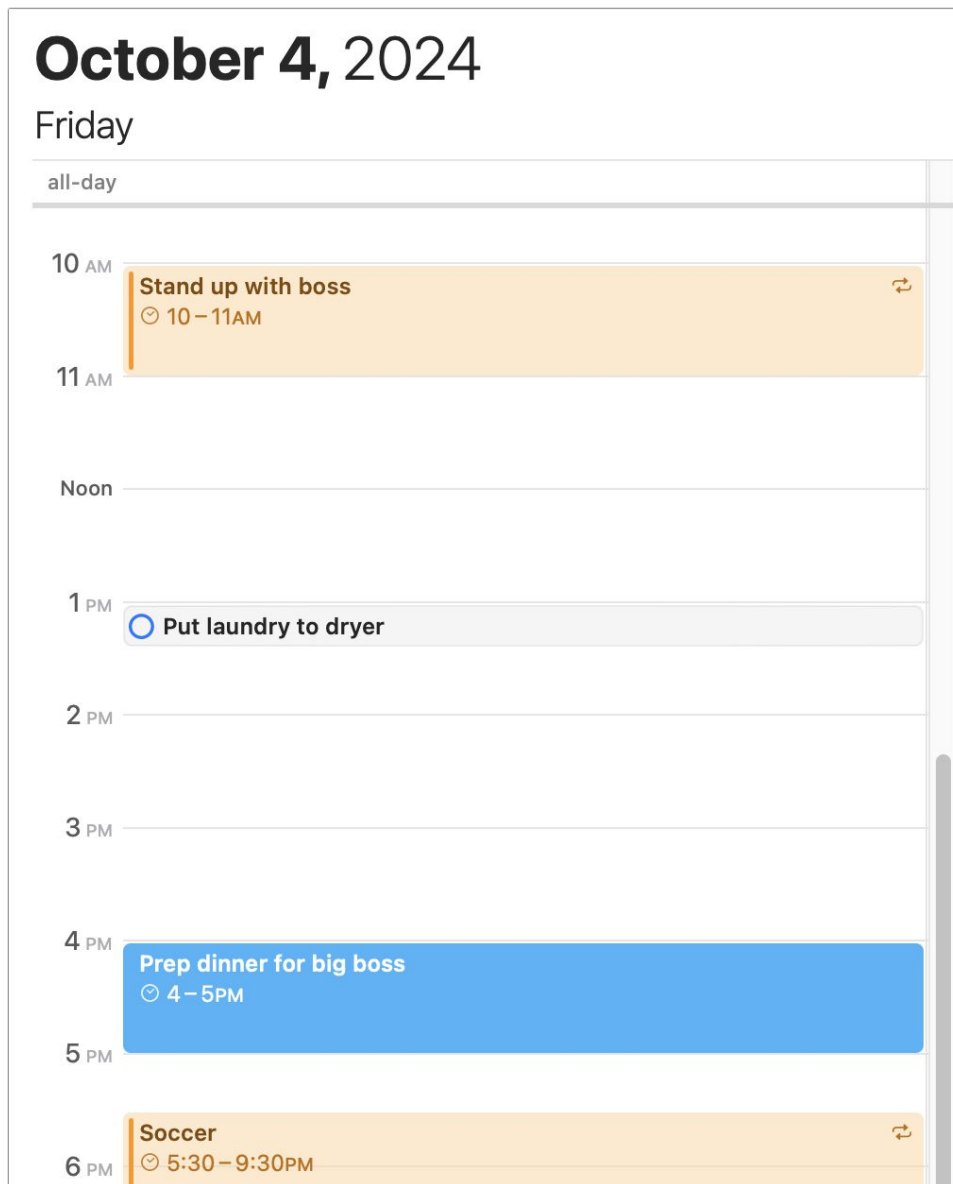


Figure 1: Get an overview of your day with Calendar.

Reminders

Apple’s Reminders app fits a different niche than the Calendar app and has a hierarchy of organization. Rather than being organized around an *event*, once or recurring, reminders work like this:

- A *reminder* is a named item that can have attributes attached, like a color, link, image, date and time by which it’s due, and other things.

Meet Calendar

Family video conferences, project deadlines, and things happening at a particular time—Calendar is the place where you can keep track of it all. The Calendar app comes with default calendars, including Home and Work. Starting in iOS 18/iPadOS 18 and macOS 15 Sequoia, you also find reminders in all views in Calendar in which you see events.

These appear on a Mac or iPad in the Calendars list on the left (**Figure 3**). If the list isn't visible, click or tap the Calendars  icon at the top of the sidebar to reveal or hide it.

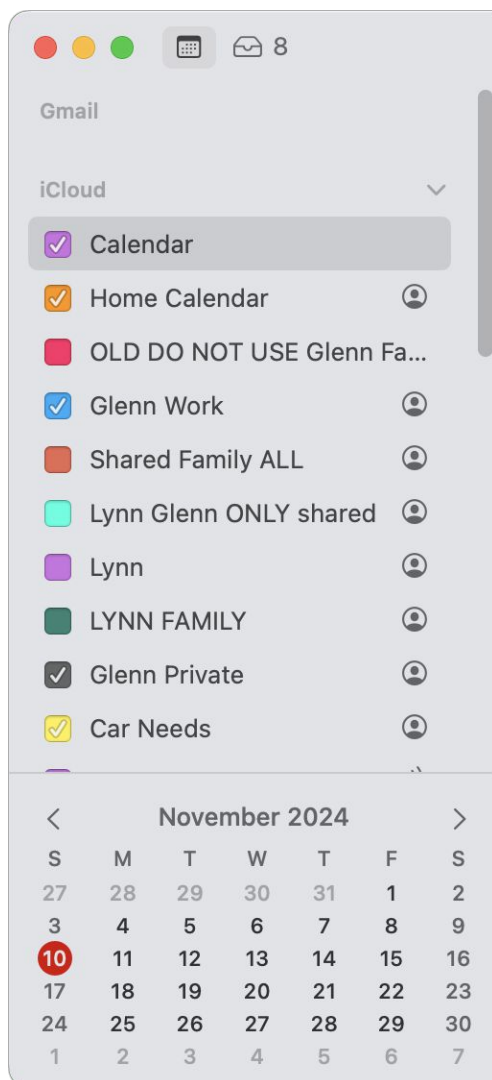


Figure 3: The Mac Calendar sidebar lets you choose which events are shown in your view.

On an iPhone, tap the Calendars label (iOS 18 and before) or the Calendars  icon at the bottom-right corner (iOS 26) to view the list of calendars. On a Mac, you can also choose View > Show/Hide Calendar List. Home and Work calendars appear by default.

Note: As noted earlier, with iPadOS 26, you can resize Calendar to have the features of the iPhone app if that's what you prefer or you want a compact Calendar format on your iPad.

Calendar Overview

Before we get started, let's go over a few general interface elements and features you will find across all views.

Today Is a Red-Letter or -Number Day

Calendar always lets you orient yourself around the current day:

- Whenever you're viewing a mini-calendar or calendar view in which the current date is shown, it is highlighted in red.
- Nearly every view has a Today button you can tap or click.

The current date always appears as white numbers on a red background (**Figure 4**). The current time also appears as white-on-red with an additional line in the Day and Multi Day view; see [Day View](#), just below.

The Today button navigates you quickly back to your current calendar date no matter where in time you've traveled to. You find this as a button in the upper-right corner on a Mac or iPad in every view; on an iPhone, Today appears in the bottom-left corner in any portrait view.

Set Up Calendar

Calendar allows a fair amount of inclusion and customization. In this chapter, learn how to make Calendar match up with your working methods. Start by adding cloud accounts, such as iCloud or Google, so you could, for instance, have both work and personal calendars on your iPhone, iPad, and Mac, and share calendars across all your devices.

You can also [Create More Calendars](#), [Tap into Special Calendars](#) (such as birthdays and holidays), and [Color-Code Your Calendars](#) to make it easier to see what's coming up.

Learn about the many ways you can [Customize Calendar](#), including when a week begins and how many days are in a week. Finally, consider whether printing a calendar should be part of your routine in [Print Your Calendar](#).

Tip: You can customize an Apple Watch face to include tiny details from your calendar and reminders, showing information at a glance. You can also access Calendar and Reminders apps on your watch. For more details, see Jeff Carlson's [Take Control of Apple Watch](#).

Connect Calendar to iCloud

iCloud syncing with Calendar lets your events appear on your other Apple devices connected to the same iCloud account. Make a change on one device and it appears automatically on all the others. Set an alarm on one, and it chimes on the others when the time comes. This can be extremely convenient when you're on the go. iCloud also lets you share calendars with other people, whether they use iCloud or not.

Navigate to your iCloud settings: go to Settings/System Settings > *Account Name* > iCloud and tap See All or click Show More Apps. Now make sure iCloud Calendar is enabled in the list of services, as well as

Calendar, which may appear separately (**Figure 24**). (If you're somehow not signed in to iCloud, follow the prompts for that first.)

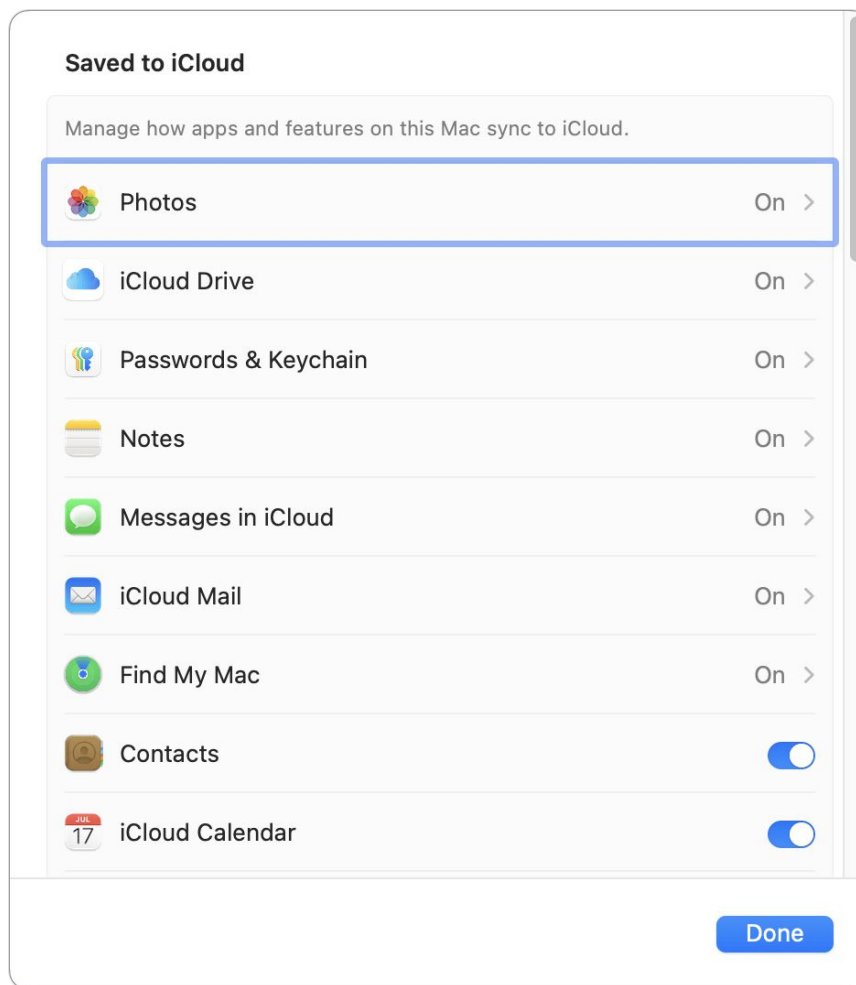


Figure 24: Enable iCloud Calendar in your Mac's System Settings.

The Bafflement of iCloud Calendar

On both my iPhone and iPad, I see iCloud Calendar and Calendar as separate items; on a Mac, just iCloud Calendar. On an iPhone or iPad, you can tap iCloud Calendar to reveal more information, which includes a Use on This iPhone/iPad switch and an option to select an email address to handle iCloud calendar invitations, as well as updates via email to updates on shared calendars. These options aren't available on a Mac.

Work with Events

Whether you're looking forward to your next watch party with friends or scheduling your kickball team's practices, the heart of the Calendar experience is scheduling and working with events.

In addition to covering the basics of adding an event, which is often easily handled with Siri, I walk you through how to [Include More Information](#). I also cover how to [Add a Suggested Event](#) from the special Siri Suggestions calendar, and look at how to [Reschedule an Event](#) and [Delete an Event](#).

Add an Event

When you're itching to add an event, you have a lot of choices:

- **Create a quick event:** Click or tap the Create Quick Event  icon. You may have to add a date or time.
- **Click or click and drag in the calendar (Mac):** Click to create an event with a default duration at the point you clicked; drag to control the duration starting at the click point.
- **Touch and hold in the calendar (iPhone/iPad):** Touch and hold to create a one-hour event. You can then drag the event to different starting points and customize it.
- **Tell Siri to add an event:** Say “Set up a meeting with Buzz at 9” or “New appointment with Marita Cheng tomorrow at noon.” (Review [How to Activate Siri](#), if Siri isn't enabled.) Siri prompts you if it needs more information. You can use this method on all your Siri-enabled devices.
- **Type to Siri to add an event:** You can type a request to Siri instead of speaking. With iOS 18/iPadOS 18 or later, double-tap the bottom of an iPhone or iPad; on a Mac, click the Siri  or  icon on the menu bar. Then type an entry (**Figure 39**).

With older operating systems, first enable Type to Siri (Settings/System Settings > Accessibility > Siri), then invoke Siri with a button on an iPhone or iPad or click the Siri 🌟 icon on the Mac menu bar, at which point you can type a request.

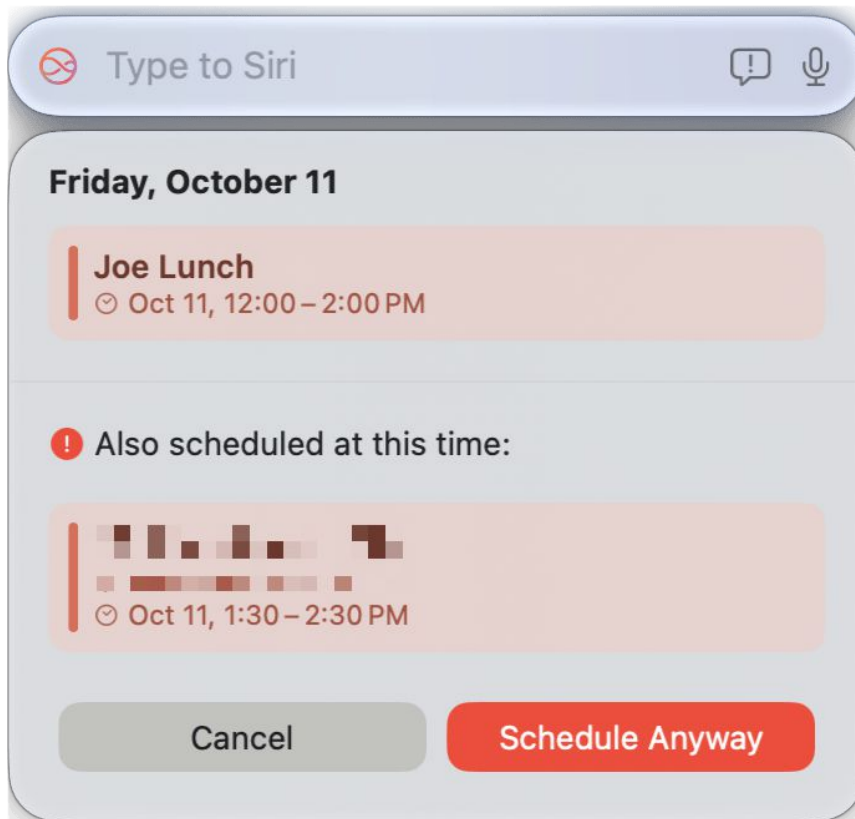


Figure 39: Siri even warns you of a conflict.

- **Use Spotlight to add an event:** You can type in the outline of an event in natural language in Spotlight search and you're shown a formatted event that you click to add (**Figure 40**).

Tip: I talk about how to add details like alarms and notes to your event ahead a page or two ahead in [Include More Information](#).

Invite People to Events

Want to make sure all the necessary folks show up to a meeting? Use Calendar to invite them to your event and keep an eye on who's coming. This chapter looks at how to send an invitation, has tips on how to Get in Touch with Invitees, and covers how to [Accept and Decline Invitations](#) that others send you.

Make Sure Your Entry Is Up to Date in Contacts

Before trying to send an invitation, make sure your personal contact card is set up in the Contacts—particularly your email address. In Contacts on a Mac, check to see if you have one by choosing Card > Go To My Card; on an iPhone or iPad, your card appears at the top of the Contacts list, labeled My Card.

If you don't have a card defined, do the following:

- ♦ **On a Mac:** Choose Card > New Card, fill out the details, and then choose Card > Make This My Card.
- ♦ **On an iPhone or iPad:** Tap the Add button and fill out the details. Tap Done. In the contact list, find the card you created, touch and hold it, and choose Make This My Card.

Send the Invitation

You can send an invitation either when you create an event or when you view an event's Info pane later. Here's how to add invitees:

1. Click the Add Invitees field on a Mac or tap the Invitees field on an iPhone or iPad.
2. Type in a person's name or email address. As you type, Calendar looks for matches in Contacts and Mail, and on connected calendar servers. If the contact information is already in your Contacts app, for instance, it can make a match just from the name.

Tip: Calendar keeps track of who you invite to meetings and makes suggestions based on this when you invite more than two people.

3. Press Return or Tab on a Mac to go accept or enter an invitee, move down a line, and add another. On an iPhone or iPad, you can type a comma to accept an entry you typed in.
4. When you finish entering invitees on a Mac, click the Send button in the bottom-right corner of the popover; on an iPhone or iPad, tap Done, tap Edit Event, and then tap the checkmark  button (iOS 26/iPadOS 26) or Done (earlier versions). (Cancel by clicking Cancel or tapping the close  button.)

Invitees receive an email with details about the event and can click to accept, decline, or waffle with a maybe. Invitations are sent as [.ics](#) files, supported by most calendar programs and online services.

Tip: Another way to add invitees is tell Siri something like: “Add Jason to my 2 P.M. meeting with Kelly.” (See [How to Activate Siri.](#))

See Who’s Free

Calendar can check invitees’ schedules on some calendaring systems to see whether they’re free at your potential meeting time. iCloud lacks this feature, but it is supported by Google Calendar, Exchange, [Fruux](#), and [KerioConnect](#), to name a few. (If you’re not sure what I’m talking about, see [What’s a Calendar Server?](#))

In the event details, click or tap the Invitees section and choose Check Availability after adding your invitees. Click or tap Next Available Time to find a time when everyone is available (**Figure 56**).

You can also choose Window > Availability Panel on a Mac with an event selected. The panel shows “This calendar does not support availability” if your calendar system lacks this capability.

Set Up Calendar Alerts

It's all well and good to have a digital event organizer that you can consult about past, current, and upcoming events. But the true glory is that you can be reminded about events in all sorts of ways and across multiple devices you carry or use, including your iPhone, iPad, Mac, and Apple Watch.

Even better? You can set up multiple reminders for a single event if that's what you need to remember to accomplish a task, start a virtual meeting on time, or get somewhere before you're late.

For instance, for a business trip event, you might set a reminder for the night before, when you need to lay out your clothes, and another for when it's time to leave. Alerts can use notifications, send you email, or even open a file.

Understand Alert Basics

To create a basic alert, open an event's Info pane. On a Mac, click the event's time or date. The Alert pop-up menu lets you control when you're informed about. Click this and choose a time—At Time of the Event, 5 Minutes Before, and so on. (I talk about custom alerts later in this chapter.)

To set additional alerts on a Mac, click the Plus  icon beside the Alert pop-up menu; on an iPhone or iPad, use the Second Alert pop-up menu. I often set an alert to remind me to prepare for an event, as well as one right before it begins. If you have second thoughts and want to remove your alert, choose None from all Alert pop-up menus.

Note: iOS/iPadOS shows only the two shortest-duration advance alerts set via a Mac.

When you set an alert this way, it takes its details from your notification defaults on each device for Calendar: in Settings/System

Settings > Notifications > Calendar. For most people, this means an alert-style notification appears (**Figure 62**).

Tip: To learn how to change your defaults, see [Set Up Notifications](#).

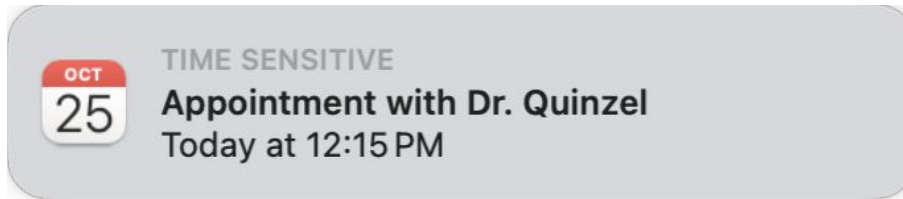


Figure 62: The basic Calendar alert throws up a notification.

On a Mac, hover over the alert to reveal a Close  icon at its corner and an Options menu. Click the  icon to trigger automatic snoozing, as described next. On an iPhone or iPad, swipe to hide the notification. Touch and hold the notification to reveal Snooze, which has no options.

On a Mac, you can snooze the alert with more granularity by clicking Options in the notification and choosing from an array of snooze times (**Figure 63**):

- **Snooze (Automatic):** Automatic snoozing results in an alert reappearing nine minutes later if it's either more than nine minutes before the start of the event or the event's start time has passed. If it's less than nine minutes before the start of the event, the alert shows up again at the time the event is to start.

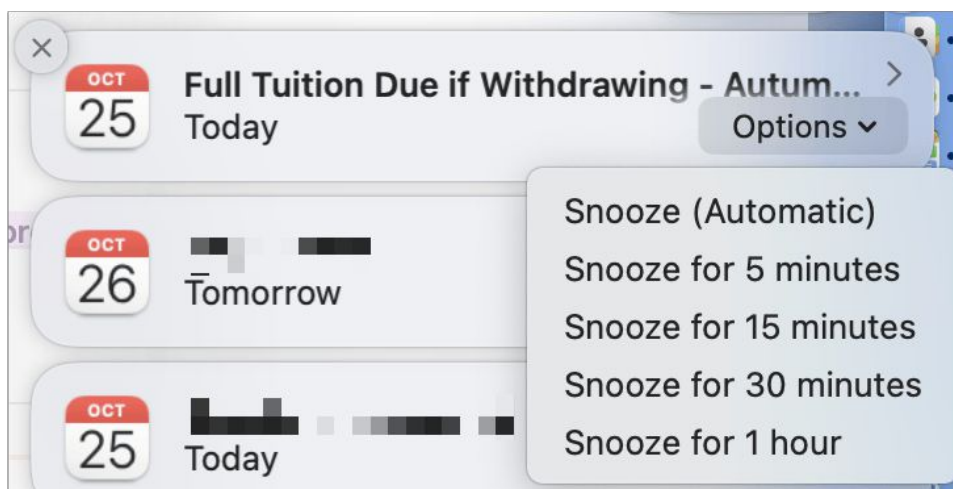


Figure 63: You can use Options to snooze.

Set Up Notifications

What a Calendar or Reminders notification looks like on your Mac, iPhone, iPad, or Apple Watch depends on each device's Notifications settings. In addition, whether a notification appears in Notification Center depends on the settings. Let's take a quick look at how you can make your Notifications settings work best for you.

Note: As notifications apply equally well to Calendar and Reminders, I've included this chapter at this point in the book, following Calendar alerts, as it's the best place to talk about it. If you skip ahead, you'll find links back to this chapter in the Reminders chapters.

Notifications on Your Mac

What your notifications ultimately look like—and sound like—depends on your systemwide settings for notifications. Go to System Settings > Notifications and, under Application Notifications, select Calendar or Reminders (**Figure 74**). Your choices are identical for both.

By default, both Calendar and Reminders notifications have Alert Style set to Persistent (Tahoe) or Alerts (Sequoia or earlier); in other words, they require that you dismiss them.

Hover over an alert-style notification to see what you can do with it. A Close  icon appears at its corner; click this to dismiss the notification. An Options button for Calendar and Reminder alerts offers options to defer:

- For Calendar, you can select Snooze plus a range of 1 minute to 1 hour to suppress the notification, or choose “Snooze until end time” to prevent further alerts (**Figure 75**).

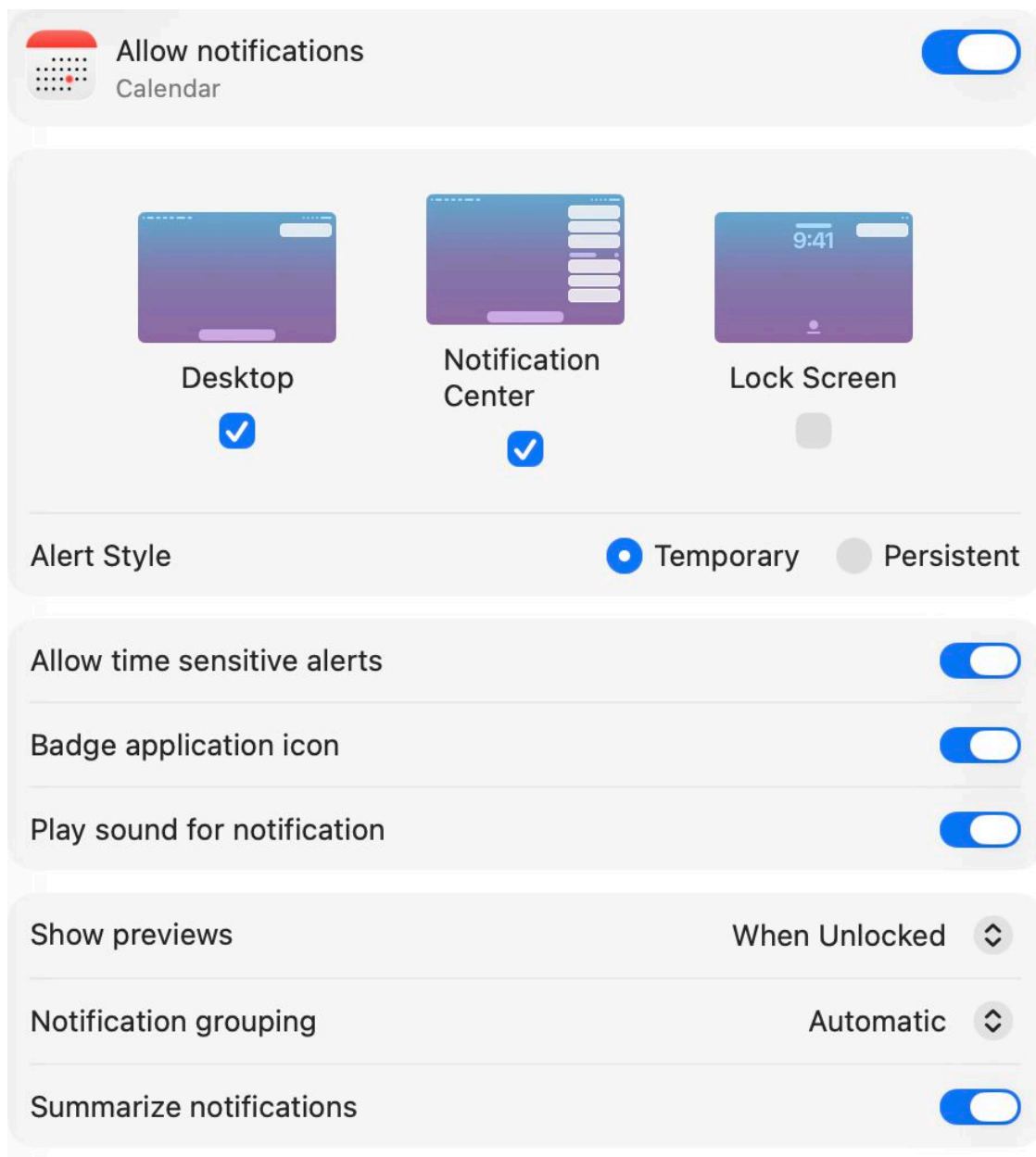


Figure 74: Calendar notifications can be tweaked extensively for the right mix of attention. (Tahoe shown here.)

Share & Subscribe to Calendars

A conference room schedule, a time-off calendar, the lineup of family events—many calendars are meant to be shared. When coworkers and family members can all see what’s coming up, add events, and set alarms for themselves as needed, you avoid a host of hassles.

Calendar offers many ways to do this. You can use iCloud to share with other iCloud users. You can share a calendar with others who use the same CalDAV or Exchange calendar server (see sidebar below about what defines a calendar server). You can publish or subscribe to read-only calendars, too.

Because a shared calendar is accessed on the server where it’s hosted (iCloud, for instance), not on your Mac, it doesn’t matter if your Mac is off. Your shared calendars are always good to go.

Tip: If you have a Family Sharing group, a special Family calendar appears automatically in your Calendars list under the iCloud header. Everyone in your group can view and edit it. See [Share a Family Calendar](#).

What’s a Calendar Server?

A calendar server is a system that lets many people store their calendars and, often, reminders on a central system, and shares access over a local network or the internet. Two of the most common types are Microsoft Exchange Server and CalDAV. Calendar server providers include big players like [iCloud](#), [Google](#), and [Office 365](#), as well as smaller outfits like [Fruux](#) and [Kerio Connect](#).

What does CalDAV stand for? Absurdly, it’s Calendaring Extensions to WebDAV (Web Distributed Authoring and Versioning). All that really means is “a way to exchange calendar events in a standardized way over a regular old web server connection.” If you’d like to know more learn about CalDAV in [this introduction](#) from CalConnect.

Share an iCloud Calendar

Once you [Connect Calendar to iCloud](#), you can use Calendar to share an iCloud calendar with others using two different methods:

- **Share with other iCloud users:** With this technique, you invite people by email address. By default, each invitee can edit the calendar, but you can turn off that privilege on a person-by-person basis.
- **Share a public calendar:** Create a URL that you can share and anyone with the URL can access in any calendar app that can subscribe to it. However, a subscriber to a public calendar can only view it—editing is not possible. (Apps that can subscribe to calendars include Apple’s Calendar, Google Calendar, and Microsoft Outlook for Mac or Windows.)

To share an iCloud calendar, here’s the general outline:

1. Working in the Calendars list:
 - On a Mac, hover your pointer over the calendar’s name to see and click a Share Calendar  icon.
 - On an iPhone or iPad, tap the Info  icon.
2. Add names to invite iCloud users—use the Share With field on a Mac or tap Add Person on an iPhone or iPad—or enable Public Calendar to generate a URL you can share with anyone. (A calendar can be shared with others and publicly available at the same time.)
3. When finished, click or tap Done.

Now let’s get into specifics.

Set Up Reminders

Whether you're the type of person who loves the satisfaction of checking off items on your to-do list or you need a kind of backup brain to remind you of the tasks that have come your way, the Reminders app can quickly become an important part of your daily routine.

This is especially the case if you take advantage of the iCloud features in Reminders. Are you walking the dog when you remember you're out of coffee beans? Add a quick reminder using Siri. Or are you at the grocery store buying coffee beans—and suddenly realize you *haven't* walked the dog? Pull up your phone and set a reminder so the pup isn't waiting forlornly indefinitely. Reminders has got your back.

Note: Like calendar entries and most iCloud features, Reminders are synced across any iPhone, iPod, Mac, and Apple Watch you own.

Reminders has a unique organizational system I covered in [Calendar vs. Reminders](#) at the start of the book. Here's a brief, er, reminder of how this interacts in the app:

- A *reminder* is a unique item, like “Remember to take out the trash” or “Pick up Jane from the library.” It can be just a bit of text or have all sorts of attributes attached to it.
- Reminders are collected into *lists* and *smart lists*:
 - A list contains reminders you added manually to it. It's an arbitrary collection of items you put in one place. Lists can be grouped in the Reminders sidebar into something like folders.
 - A smart list is a collection of reminders that can appear in any list, derived from attributes like date, flags, priority, tags, location, and other elements.

This chapter and the next three teach you how to use Reminders effectively. I start with a tour of the app features, and then look at how

to configure Reminders on your Mac, iPhone, and iPad, with iCloud, and with other services.

In the following two chapters, I take you through the “atom” of Reminders: the individual reminder item ([Work with Reminders](#)) and then how to best deal with lists and smart lists ([Manage Lists](#)).

Tip: Starting in iOS 18/iPadOS 18 and macOS 15 Sequoia, reminders appear in the Calendar app as all-day events or at the time indicated for timed reminders. Screenshots that follow are drawn from those releases or iOS 26/iPadOS 26 and Tahoe.

Secure Your Reminders in iCloud

Apple uses encryption to protect all your data at rest on their servers and in transit between you and iCloud. It offers two approaches. In the default method, the company controls the encryption keys used to protect some kinds of data. Apple-managed encryption includes calendar entries, reminders, lists, and associated information. This mode of encryption means your data at iCloud could be accessible if the service were hacked or your account were broken into, or if requested by the government (legally or illegally).

You can upgrade to enhanced encryption for several kinds of iCloud data, including reminders (but not calendar events; see below). Enable Advanced Data Protection (ADP), which turns on end-to-end encryption (E2EE) between your devices. E2EE means that all the secrets needed to encrypt and decrypt your data resides only on your devices—an iPhone, iPad, Mac, Watch, and even HomePod and Apple TV. Apple can’t access the keys, and thus your data is inaccessible to them or any other party.

Among other requirements, all your devices linked to your Apple Account must run at least macOS 13.1 Ventura, iOS 16.2, iPadOS 16.2, watchOS 9.2, tvOS 16.2, and HomePod 16.2. If you want to turn on ADP, you can [read Apple’s step-by-step advice here](#), or consult my book [Take Control of Securing Your Apple Devices](#), which provides detailed instructions for enabling on iPhone, iPad, and Mac.

Work with Reminders

The basic unit of Reminders is, not so peculiarly, a reminder. In this chapter, I take you through the quickest ways to add a reminder—no matter what you’re doing—as soon as you think of it. That includes a new way to create reminders for emails you need to act on, too. I cover the basics of rearranging, copying, and deleting them, so you can [Manage Reminders](#) like a pro. And I look at how to [Assign a Reminder](#) in a shared list, so that everyone knows their responsibilities.

Those who need an extra push can learn to [Sound the Alarm](#) at a certain time or place, or even when you’re messaging a particular person; and to [Set Other Options](#), like adding a note, URL, phone number, image, or sketch. Finally, because it’s the most satisfying part, you’ll learn how to [Work with Completed Reminders](#) and how to show and hide them.

Add a Reminder

Adding a reminder is a cinch, because Apple gives you so many shortcuts. Your job is to find the one that works best for you.

I get into all additional options that a reminder can have, such as a due date or time, location, or priority, in [Set Other Options](#).

Add an Item in the Reminders App

In the Reminders app, select a list. You can then carry out one of the following to add a new item:

- **On any device:** Click or tap in the empty area below all items in the list and a new blank item appears.
- **On a Mac:** Click the Add  icon at the top of a list.
- **On an iPhone or iPad:** Tap the add  button in the bottom-right corner of the screen (iOS 26/iPadOS 26) or tap New Reminder

or New Item at the bottom of the screen (iOS 18/iPadOS 18 or earlier).

Tip: As an extra graphic flourish, the add button or New Reminder link on an iPhone or iPad appears in the same color as the list.

- **On a Mac or in iPadOS 26:** Choose File > New Reminder or, with a shopping list selected, File > New Item. Or press ⌘-N.

Is It a Reminder or an Item?

All reminders added to a list are called *reminders* unless the list is a grocery list, which, as a special case—and just to make things harder—are called *items*. Unless it's truly important to call out the difference, I refer to elements in a list as reminders or items generically.

A unfilled completion circle appears; you check it later to mark the item as finished. Type your reminder text on the line next to it.

With no list or the Today item select, when you create a new item by tapping or clicking an icon or link, the new item is set to the default Reminders list.

Reminders supports what's called “natural language” entry, allowing you to compose a reminder similar to how you'd speak one to Siri. For example, type *Take out trash tomorrow at 9* or *Call grandma June 2* and the app suggests an alarm (**Figure 87**). Select the matching details from popup menus that appear (Mac) or the QuickType bar (iPhone/iPad). Reminders can handle sentences that involve slightly more complicated time settings—like *Call Dad every Tuesday at 2 PM*—but it's incapable of sophisticated recurring requests like *Put out the trash every Monday and Wednesday* even though you can configure a reminder manually that meets those terms.

In iOS 26/iPadOS 26 or Tahoe, the more expansive Spotlight feature in these new versions also lets you type a similar natural-language entry and have it parsed into a reminder you can tap or click to add (**Figure 88**).

Manage Lists

If you use Reminders primarily to jog your memory about miscellaneous tasks, you might not need lists beyond the default ones (see [General Overview of Reminders](#)). However, lovers of to-do lists are likely to want to organize theirs by topic—Books to Read, Groceries, Places We Want to Visit, and so forth. In that case, you’ll need to create new lists.

To add a new list, do one of the following:

- **iOS 26/iPadOS 26 or Tahoe:** Tap or click the Add List  icon at the top of the list sidebar or list view.
- **Mac or iPadOS 26:** Choose File > New List (⌘-Shift-N).
- **Sequoia and earlier:** Click the Add List  icon at the bottom of the sidebar.
- **iOS 18/iPadOS 18 or earlier:** Tap the Add List link at the bottom of window.

Now you can type in a name for your list, and press Return, tap the checkmark  icon, or tap Done.

Once you have a few lists, you need to manage them—the point of this chapter. Let’s start with how to change your default Reminders list, and examine smart lists, a built-in way to organize lists. Then I move on to modifying, tagging, renaming, deleting, and grouping lists.

Tip: Want to look at more than one list at a time? On a Mac, double-click a list’s title in the sidebar to open it in a new window. In iPadOS 26, choose Window > New Window, which creates an additional Reminders window; you can do this repeatedly.

Change Your Default Reminders List

New reminders appear in the list named Reminders unless you change that behavior. If you want a different default list, go to Reminders > Settings on a Mac and choose one from the Default List pop-up menu (**Figure 123**). On an iPhone or iPad, go to Settings > Apps > Reminders > Default List to choose a default list.

Tip: The default list choice is unique for each device, not synced among them.

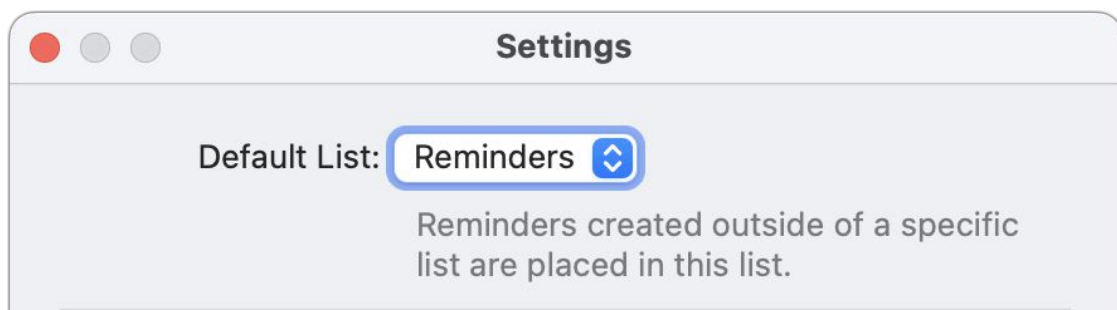


Figure 123: Use the pop-up menu to change the default Reminders list to another name.

From now on, all new reminders are appended to your default list, unless you choose another one (or specify it by voice with Siri).

Tip: Siri uses your default reminder choice to add reminders when you don't specify a list on all platforms, including Apple Watch, which mirrors your iPhone settings.

Set Up Grocery Lists

Isn't it nice when artificial intelligence provides real smarts that makes your life better? Such is the case with the Groceries feature. As you add items to a list set to the Groceries type, Reminders drops items categories that it deems most likely to match, like produce, frozen food, and dairy (**Figure 124**).

Troubleshoot Problems

Even the most well-informed user of Apple's Calendar and Reminders can sometimes run into trouble, whether it's duplicate calendar events or disappearing reminders. Here's how to solve some common conundrums.

How Do I Get Rid of Duplicate Events?

If you find your calendar littered with duplicate events, choose View > Refresh Calendars (or press ⌘-R) on a Mac; open Calendar and then tap Calendars to see your list of calendars on an iPhone or iPad and swipe down to refresh.

If that doesn't work, check whether you have an On My Mac calendar that is identical to one of your iCloud calendars on a Mac. Hide it by deselecting it in the Calendars list and see whether duplicates go away.

If they do, you can either keep this calendar hidden or delete the calendar altogether by Control-clicking/right-clicking its name in the Calendars list and choosing Delete.

How Can I Get an On My Mac Option?

Apple doesn't automatically create locally stored calendars listed as On My Mac in the Calendar app on a Mac. However, you can create a calendar that adds a local calendar and inserts On My Mac as a category in the sidebar at the top. Control-click/right-click in an empty area in the sidebar, typically at the bottom, and choose New Calendar. (If you don't have an empty area, close up all the cloud headings.)

How Do I Remove Duplicate Birthdays?

If the special Birthdays calendar, discussed in [Tap into Special Calendars](#), shows a birthday more than once, you can remove the extras. The most efficient way to handle this is on a Mac.

First, choose Calendar > Settings > General. Deselect the Show Birthdays Calendar checkbox and select it again. If that doesn't work, duplicate contacts are probably to blame. Open the Contacts app and choose Card > Look for Duplicates. If the app finds them, choose Merge (**Figure 132**). You may need to repeat this step.

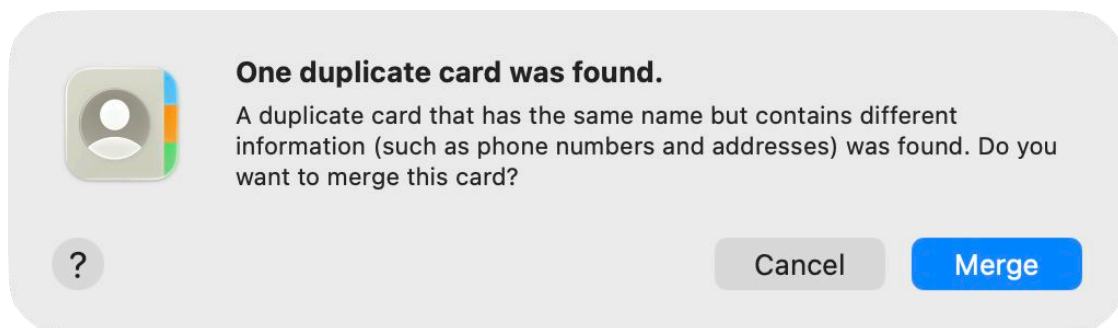


Figure 132: Yes, please.

If some duplicate birthdays *still* appear in Calendar, go into Contacts and manually delete the stubborn duplicates.

How Do I Get Rid of Duplicate iCloud Calendars?

If identical iCloud calendars appear to be multiplying like bunnies, I again urge using your Mac as the only efficient way to manage it. First try launching Calendar and choosing View > Refresh Calendars.

If that doesn't work, log in to [iCloud.com](https://www.icloud.com), click Calendar, and see whether the duplicate calendars appear in the list there. Then:

- **If duplicates appear on the iCloud website:** To be safe, go back to your Calendar app and make a backup of each of the affect-

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Take Control Books Executive Editor Glenn Fleishman never stops writing about technology and its implications. He's in his third decade of writing for publications as varied as *American History*, *Fast Company*, the *Economist*, *Increment*, the *New York Times*, *Macworld*, and *TidBITS*, and many others. In 2012, he was a two-game champion on *Jeopardy!*

You can find Glenn on [Mastodon](#) (@glennf@zeppelin.flights) and [Bluesky](#) (@glennf.com). Reach him by email at glenn@glennf.com.

Shameless Plug

I don't write just ebooks—I also produce ones of actual physical matter. My latest two are [How Comics Are Made: A Visual History from the Drawing Board to the Printed Page](#), about the production and reproduction of newspaper comics; and [Six Centuries of Type & Printing](#), tracing the evolution of type and printing technology across 600 years.

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