

5-Minute How-To: Filter Spam in Apple Mail

Cut down your junk email in a few easy steps



Spam is everywhere, but with modern email, you can smartly combat this problem. Built into every Mac is the ability to filter out the spam from your Inbox. Apple has made this a relatively simple process with the Mail application, but we'll show you the ropes in this how-to. Continue reading to learn all about spam-filtering on the Mac. **BY CORY BOHON**

>>> **WHAT YOU NEED**

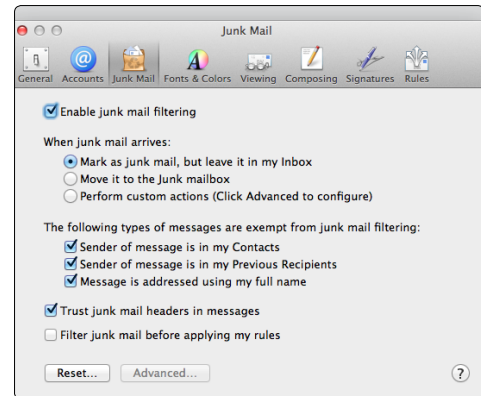
LEVEL:
easy

>> A Mac with Apple Mail

1 Activate the Filter

To enable the Mail spam filter, navigate to Mail > Preferences > Junk Mail. Once there, check the box labeled “Enable junk mail filtering.” As a safeguard, ensure that the option to “Mark as junk mail, but leave it in my Inbox” is selected under the “When junk mail arrives” option—at least for now.

In the second section of the Junk Mail preferences, you have the ability to select which types of messages are automatically exempt from junk mail filtering. With any of these options checked, the messages that match the rules will never be marked as spam, and thusly not removed from Mail. The next-to-last option, “Trust junk mail headers in messages” gives Mail the ability to see the junk mail message headers set by your Internet Service Provider (ISP) or email provider. Checking this option will help Mail more accurately mark spam messages. The last option, “Filter junk mail before applying my rules” lets Mail first filter your mail before using your rules to make changes to the messages.



2 Train the Filter

Training the junk mail filter is imperative to getting good spam-filtering results. To train your filter, you'll want to mark all of the spam messages coming into your Inbox as such by selecting the message and clicking Message > Mark > As Junk Mail; you can also select the message and press Shift + Command + J. If a message gets marked as junk but isn't spam, be sure to let Mail know by pressing the “Not Junk” button in the spam label bar in the message. (You can also use this bar to load blocked images of suspected spam.)



3 No Spam, No Hassle

After a while, the junk-mail filter will begin correctly identifying spammy messages. Once you feel comfortable with the results, go back to preferences and select “Move it to the Junk mailbox” for the “When junk mail arrives” option. This will automatically move spammy messages to the “Junk” folder in Mail's sidebar. You'll want to periodically go to that folder to check out the messages to make sure that Mail is correctly identifying the junk mail, and not marking legitimate mail as junk.

