Ten Tips for Setting up your New Mac

1. Run Software Update There is no telling how long your new Mac was sitting on the shelf before your received it, so you should install the software updates that have been released since your Mac was manufactured. It is very simple, but it will take a while, so you can start it while you continue to use your new Mac. Using Software Update depends on your new Mac already having an Internet connection, so be sure to establish that first. To run Software update, select it from the Apple menu in the top left (click on the Apple!). When that opens, click Software Update. After some time checking, a new panel will pop up listing software updates that apply to your Mac. Go ahead and click Install Items and click through the remaining buttons and passwords. Expect it to take some time to download and install the updates. You will probably need to restart your Mac to use the updates.

2. Move and resize your Dock By default, Apple puts the Dock at the bottom of your screen, but it can be located on the left, right or bottom if you wish. To do this, go to System Preferences and select Dock from the Personal row. If you don't see all the preference choices, click the Show All button at the top of the window. In this Preference Pane, you can select the Position on Right (or Top or Left) button and then adjust the Dock Size slider to reduce the width of the Dock until it doesn't cover the icons next to it. I like Magnification, but this is a personal preference. This enlarges the Dock icons when you move your mouse over them. While this effect looks cool and is easy to read - some find it distracting.

3. Add "Right-Clicking" to Your Mouse or Trackpad   Apple has long been criticized for making Macs with only one button mice and trackpads, but did you know you can still use a second button to "right-click"? For your new laptop this secondary click is done by tapping two fingers at once. You can enable this by going to System Preferences > Keyboard and Mouse > Trackpad and checking the box next to "Tap trackpad with two fingers for secondary click." While you are there, check the box for "Use two fingers to scroll" and "Allow horizontal scrolling." For your new iMac with a mouse, you go to System Preferences > Keyboard and Mouse > Mouse, and use the drop down menu pointing to the right side of the mouse to select "Secondary Button." If your are left handed, you can reverse the left and right buttons if you choose. Don't forget to take some time to explore all the options on this preference pane.

4. Become a Full Citizen on the Internet Safari will get you to most sites on the Internet, but because Windows computers dominate web usage, you will find some hiccups. The first thing is download the **Flip4Mac** *http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/products/windows-media-player/wmcomponents* a Windows Media Player plug-in. Install this to view Windows Media files. And as a few sites also don't recognize Safari, download and use the **FireFox** web browser when you run into a problem.

5. Calibrate your Laptop Battery Apple advises you to calibrate your new MacBook battery in the first week of use and every couple months after that. You can find directions on calibrating here on **Apple's Web site**. *http://docs.info.apple.com/article.html?path=Mac/10.4/en/mh2339.html*

6. Create a User Account Many people recommend that everyday Mac use be run under a User account rather than an Administrator account. The reason for the User account is that it is very hard to do something bad to your Mac inadvertently as a mere user. When you operate a user account, your Mac will ask for the Administrator name and password to do anything significant to the system. It can be annoying but it will give you an added layer of protection against inadvertently downloading or deleting something stupid. To add users accounts to your Mac, go to System Preferences>Accounts and click the + button in the lower left. You may need to click and unlock the padlock icon below it to have access.

7. Create a Backup System Speaking of protection… Now is the time to devise a backup system. You need to plan for when you make mistakes or your hard drive quits on you. Both will happen. It's just a matter of time. Fortunately, Apple makes it really easy by using Time Machine. You can add an Apple Time Capsule for approx. $300, or just go buy an external hard drive twice the size of your internal one for under $100. Just plug in the drive and go to System Preferences>Time Machine to get your backup system hooked up. **Extra Tip for laptop users:** portable hard drive prices are plummeting. Get good ones at Costco for under $100. They are small and have only a single USB cord for power and hookup.

8. Customize the Dock We covered moving the Dock above, but you should also take the time to customize the Dock too. The Dock is made up of shortcuts to favorite applications, folders and files. They aren't the files themselves, so you can just drag the icons on and off your Dock without changing them. Apple preloads you dock with shortcuts that they think you will like, but you should determine that for yourself. I suggest going through the Dock and getting rid of them all except the apps, folders and files you want fast access to. When an app opens and appears in the dock, just right-click on it and select Keep in Dock. Alternately, just drag icons on and off the Dock as desired from Finder.

9. Customize Expose   We can customize many parts of your new computer, but I think after the Dock, that Expose is most productive. Go to System Preferences>Expose & Spaces and click on Expose. You have choices to customize each corner (Hot Corners) of your screen, so that when you drag the arrow with your mouse (or trackpad) to that corner something good happens. I have set up the upper left corner of my screen to put the display to sleep, the lower left corner to open DashBoard, the lower right corner to show all open Windows and the upper right corner to show the Desktop. These shortcuts save a lot of time.

10. The Mac Advantage   The best thing about using a Mac in my mind is how it lets you do the things you most want to do easily. This is in large part due to the iLife apps that come with each new Mac. The iLife apps are: iTunes, iPhoto, iMovie, iDVD, iWeb and Garage Band. In particular, get started with iTunes and iPhoto right away.

10+ Some Fun   Now go open Photo Booth in your Applications folder and goof around. Smile for the camera and click away on the Effects button. This is how you will look to others if you use FaceTime – Apple's new video conferencing software. It's a great way to laugh for a half hour on your first day with your new Mac!

10++ More Fun Once you have updated your Snow Leopard software to the latest version (10.6.6 or higher) you will see the new App Store logo next to the Finder on your Dock. Click on this and browse all the free games and utilities you can add to your new Mac. Solitaire, Sudoku, Typing Tutors, etc. 200+ free programs to download – plus an equal number of inexpensive paid applications.