

# Mac OS X - Screen and Login Passwords

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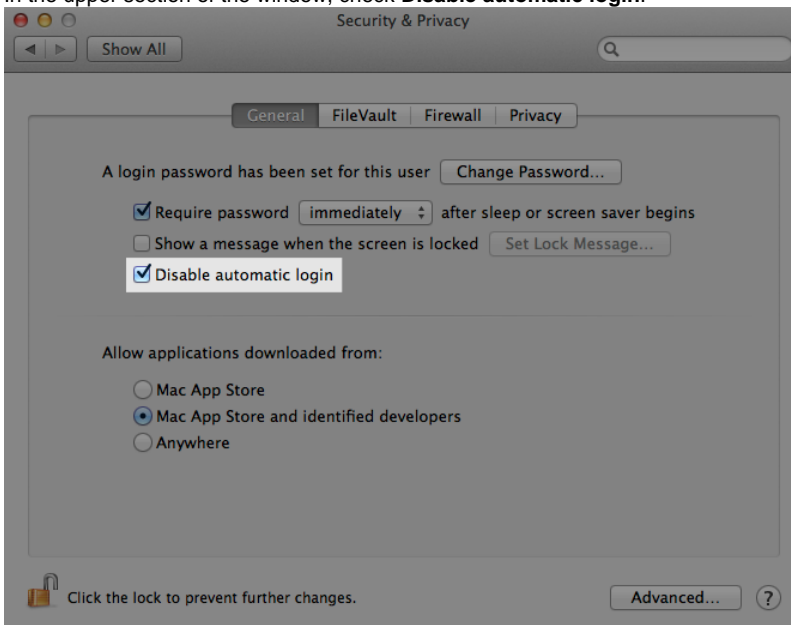
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### Make Login Mandatory

Mac OS X 10.3.9 and higher are set to log in the Administrator user automatically. While this is convenient, anyone can turn on the machine and use it as the administrator. The Keychain, which holds sensitive information such as password information for websites, is also unlocked by default at login. If auto login is enabled, an unauthorized user could use your computer to access protected information. Turn off automatic login as described below:

1. From the Apple menu, select **System Preferences** and select the **Security & Privacy** preference pane.  
*Result:* The Security & Privacy System Preferences window appears. Click on the **General** tab, if not selected.
2. In the upper section of the window, check **Disable automatic login**.



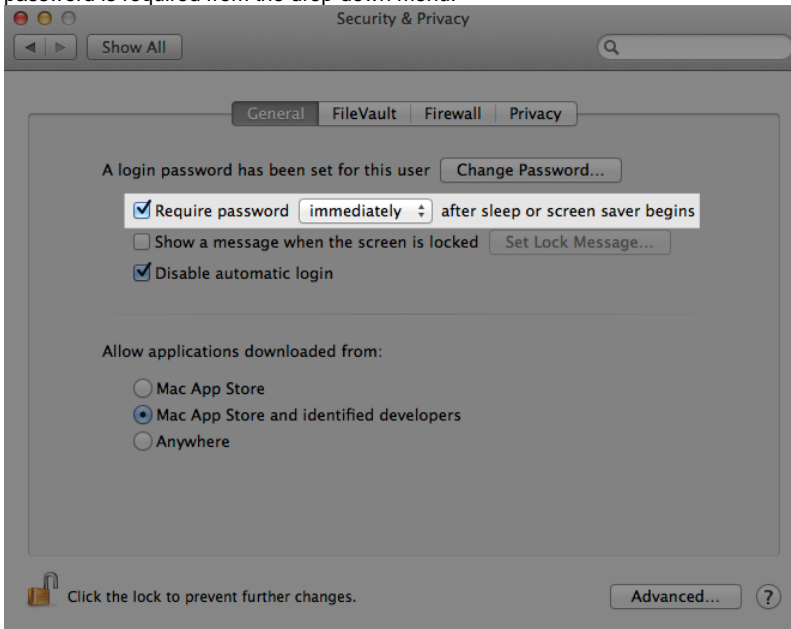
*Result:* Automatic login is turned off for every account on the computer, so every user has to log in with a password.

### Require a Password

You can secure your computer when you are away from your desk in several ways:

## Require a Password to Wake Your Computer

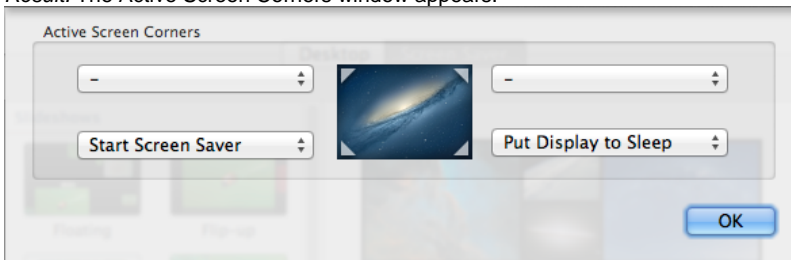
1. From the Apple menu, select **System Preferences** and select the **Security & Privacy** preference pane.  
*Result:* The Security & Privacy System Preferences window shown above appears.
2. In the upper section of the window, check **Require password after sleep or screensaver begins** and select a time interval before a password is required from the drop-down menu.



*Result:* Your Mac OS X password will be required to wake your computer from sleep or to stop a screensaver.

## Set up Screen Saver

1. From the Apple menu, select **System Preferences** and then select the **Desktop & Screensaver** preference pane and select the **Screensaver** tab.  
*Result:* The Desktop & Screensaver window appears.
2. Choose an elapsed time for activating the screensaver using either the **Start screen saver** slider (OS X 10.7 and earlier) or the **Start after** drop-down menu (OS X 10.8 and later). If you want to activate the screen saver immediately, click the **Hot Corners** button at the bottom of the window.  
*Result:* The Active Screen Corners window appears.



3. Select a corner of your screen that you are least likely to click accidentally as a hot corner, choose **Start Screensaver** from the dropdown menu for that corner, then click **OK**.  
*Result:* If you move the cursor to the chosen corner, the screensaver appears, sometimes after a pause.
4. Unlock the screensaver by moving the cursor.  
*Result:* The Authenticate dialog appears.
5. Enter your OS X User Name and Password.  
*Result:* The screensaver disappears.

## Use the OS X Keychain

The Keychain can be used to manage certificates, passwords and settings for access to file servers and Web servers. By default, when you log in, your Keychain unlocks. You can use the Keychain Access application, described below, to lock your Keychain when the system sleeps or is inactive for a time. The system will ask you for your password the next time you try to access secure data. Other users on the system cannot access your Keychain or its data.

## Show Keychain status

1. Go to **Applications > Utilities > Keychain Access**.

*Result:* The Keychain Access window appears.

2. On the menu, go to **Keychain Access > Preferences**.
3. Select **Show Status in Menu Bar**.

*Result:* A check appears beside the menu option, and a padlock icon appears in the OS X menu bar. An unlocked padlock means your Keychain is unlocked.

## Lock the Keychain

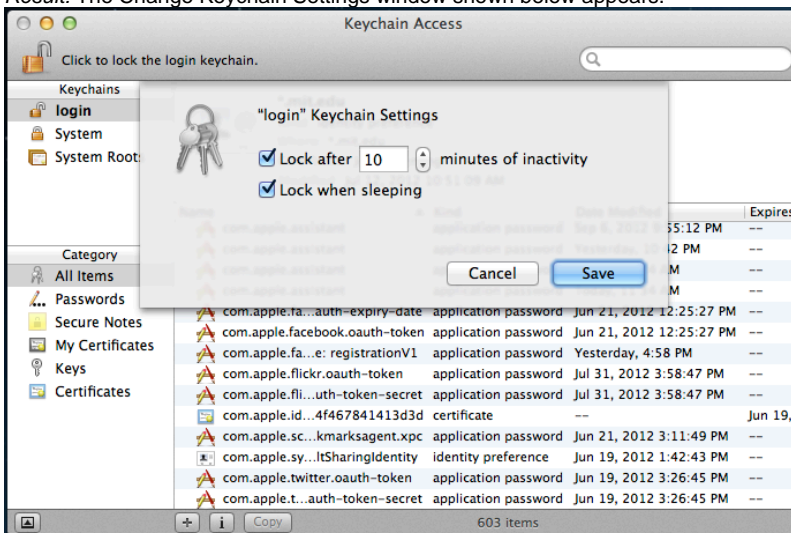
### To lock the keychain once:

1. Click on the padlock icon and select **Lock All Keychains**. Once the Keychain is locked, your OSX user account password is required to unlock it.

### To lock the keychain automatically:

If you want the Keychain to lock automatically after a period of time, do the following:

1. In Keychain Access, go to the **Edit > Change Keychain Settings for Keychain "login"** (or whichever keychain you want to modify).  
*Result:* The Change Keychain Settings window shown below appears.



2. Check the options **Lock after x minutes of inactivity** and/or **Lock when sleeping**.
3. Click the **Save** button.

*Result:* Depending on your selections, the Keychain will lock after a certain number of minutes and/or when the computer goes to sleep.

## Another way to lock your screen

You can also use the Lock Screen option on the Keychain Access View menu to turn on the screen saver. If you chose the Security System Preferences password requirement recommended above, your user account password is required to turn it off.

## Change Passwords

By default, the login password on OS X 10.3.9 and higher is the same as the Keychain password, but you can change either one so that they are different. This prevents a person who is able to log into your account from accessing the Keychain unless they also know the Keychain password.

## Apple articles on Passwords:

About Your Keychain Password: [Lion](#), [Mountain Lion](#)

[Change or Reset Login Password](#)

**Note:** Resetting the administrator password will not change your Keychain password.