

OS X Mountain Lion: Enable and disable the root user



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The root user, or superuser, is a special user account in OS X that can modify and delete critical system files. By default, the root user is not enabled.

Warning: If you log in as the root user, use extreme caution. You can damage the system by moving or deleting important files. Use this account only for specific administration or monitoring tasks. When you finish the tasks that require logging in as the root user, always log out, log in as an administrator, and then disable the root user.

Enable the root user

1. Choose Apple menu > System Preferences, and then click Users & Groups.
2. Click the lock icon to unlock it, and then type an administrator name and password.
3. In the Network Account Server section, click Join or Edit.
4. Click Open Directory Utility.
5. Click the lock icon to unlock it, and then enter your administrator name and password.
6. Choose Edit > Enable Root User, and then enter a root user password in the Password and Verify fields. Be sure to specify a secure password.

Tips for creating secure passwords

Disable the root user

1. Choose Apple menu > System Preferences, and then click Users & Groups.
2. Click the lock icon to unlock it, and then type an administrator name and password.
3. In the Network Account Server section, click Join or Edit.
4. Click Open Directory Utility.
5. Click the lock icon to unlock it, and then enter your administrator name and password.
6. Choose Edit > Disable Root User.

Change the root user password

1. Choose Apple menu > System Preferences, and then click Users & Groups.
2. Click the lock icon to unlock it, and then type an administrator name and password.
3. In the Network Account Server section, click Join or Edit.
4. Click Open Directory Utility.
5. Click the lock icon to unlock it, and then enter your administrator name and password.
6. Choose Edit > Change Root Password, and then enter a root user password in the Password and Verify fields. Be sure to specify a secure password.

Tips for creating secure passwords