

03-20-2022, Mac Basics/Beginners SIG – Using Screen Zoom on Your Mac

Note: This discussion is based on macOS, 12.2.1 (Monterey). Some illustrations may differ when using other versions of macOS or OS X. Most illustrations are from screenshots on my iMac or MacBook Pro.

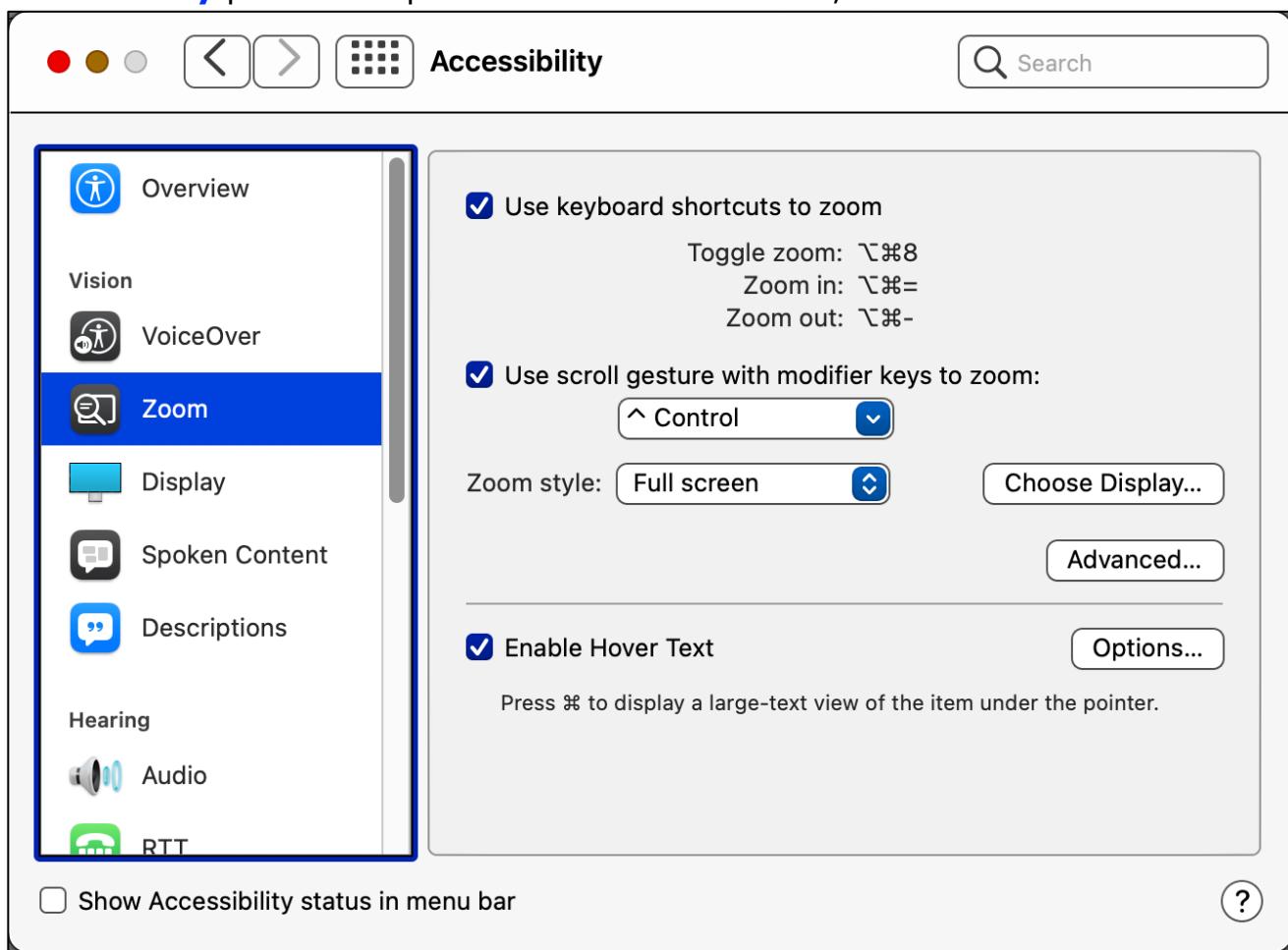
In this Mac Basics presentation, we'll discuss how to use the **Zoom** feature on your Mac (what it is and how to use it). Zoom has a lot of capability. We'll look at some of its major features but not all of them. Also, there's additional information available from the macOS User Guide by clicking on the help question mark in the lower right-hand corner of the screen.

Credit: This presentation is based on an article at MacMost (<https://macmost.com>), a member-sponsored website with Mac videos and tips and a great source of articles and guides about using your Mac. Also, credit to macOS Help and Apple Support. (See the credits at the end of this presentation for the URL.)

Do you find on occasion that items on your Mac's screen are a little hard to read? Wouldn't it be great if you could magnify that item a little bit to make it larger and easier to see? Well, your Mac has a built-in feature for that. It's called **Zoom**.

Accessibility System Preference Pane > Zoom

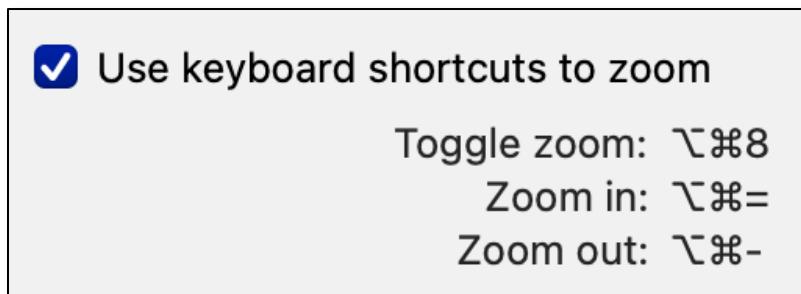
To locate the Zoom feature, open **System Preferences**, and then select the **Accessibility** preference pane. In the list on the left, choose **Zoom**:



System Preferences > Accessibility Preference Pane > Zoom

Use Keyboard Shortcuts to Zoom

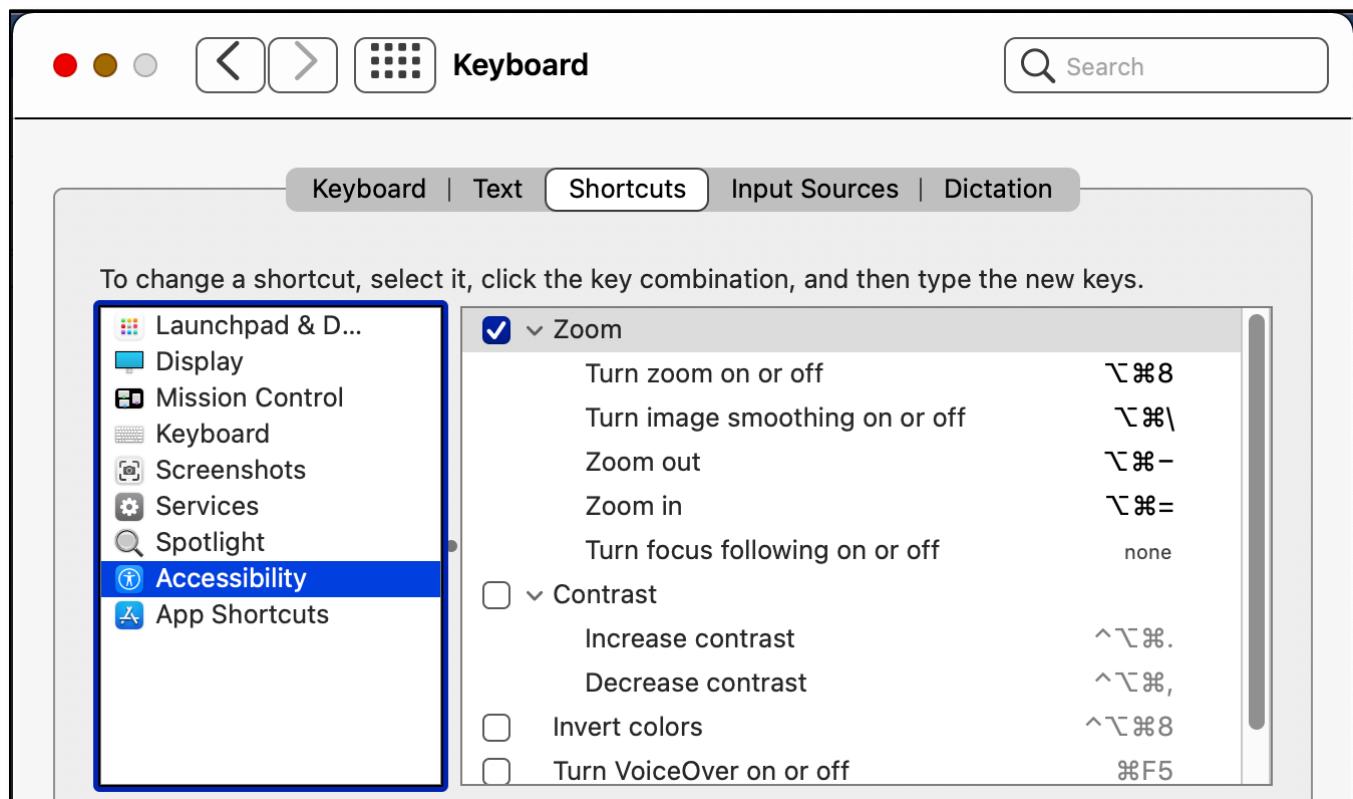
As shown below, there are several preset keyboard shortcuts for using Zoom:



Zoom Keyboard Shortcuts

- Toggle Zoom (on or off): **Option + Command + 8** (`⌥⌘8`)
- Zoom In: **Option + Command + =** (`⌥⌘=`)
- Zoom Out: **Option + Command + -** (`⌥⌘-`)

Want to Change a Keyboard Shortcut for Zoom? If desired, the Zoom keyboard shortcuts can be changed. Open the **Keyboard** system preference and select the **Shortcuts** tab. Then select the **Accessibility** group. The available **Zoom** keyboard shortcuts are displayed at the top of the list. Click on a shortcut to select it, and then type a new one.



System Preferences > Keyboard > Shortcuts > Accessibility > Zoom Keyboard Shortcuts

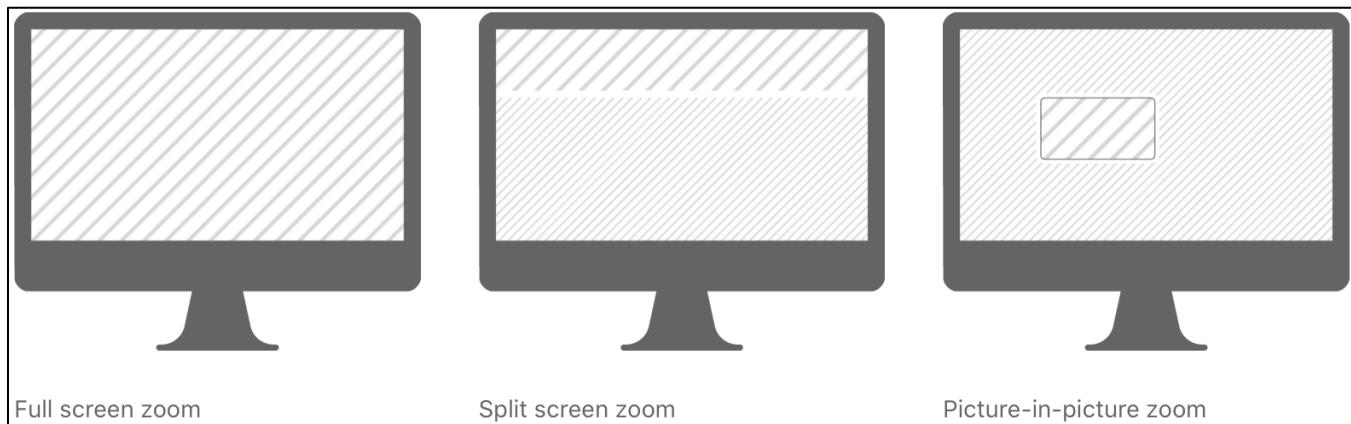
You can also set up a *gesture* for your keypad (*not discussed here*).

Use Scroll Gesture With Modifier Keys to Zoom

To change the zoom magnification, press and hold the selected modifier key while scrolling with your trackpad or the scroll wheel on your mouse. You can choose to use the **Control** (^), **Option** (⌥) or **Command** (⌘) modifier keys.

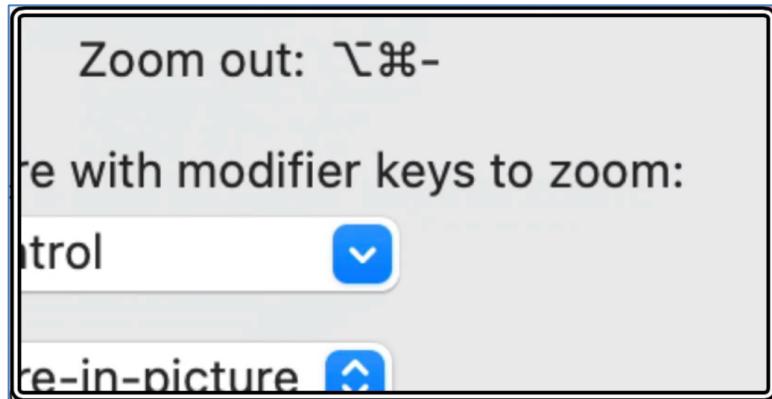
Zoom Styles

There are three types of zoom styles: (1) **Picture-in-Picture**, (2) **Split Screen**, and (3) **Full Screen**.



Zoom Styles

Picture-in-Picture. Once you enable Zoom with the keyboard shortcut, you then see a small rectangle window that zooms in (magnifies) a portion of the screen. As you move the pointer (cursor) around on the screen, the rectangle moves to magnify a different area, allowing you to zoom in anywhere you want:



Zoom Magnification

Note: This presentation will focus on Picture-in-picture Zoom mode.

Split Screen. Part of the screen becomes the Zoom, starting off at the top of the screen. The size and location of the split area is adjusted in the **Advanced Options** section. Here you can resize it and also drag it wherever you like on the screen.

Full Screen. Here the whole screen Zooms, and it will follow the pointer wherever you move it.

Choose Display

The **Choose Display** button only appears if you're using **Full Screen Zoom**. It allows you to select a second display connected to your Mac and then apply Full Screen Zoom features on that display.

Enable Hover Text

After selecting this checkbox, you can press and hold the **Command** key and then move your cursor over an item to display a larger, high-resolution version of that item. Click the Options button to customize this feature (text size, font, activation modifier key, color, etc.)



Enable Hover Text

Note: I've had mixed success with the feature. It works well in most, but not all, Apple apps (Safari, System Preferences, Messages, etc.) but may require a slight jiggle movement of the cursor after holding down the Command key. In some other apps, notably Microsoft Office and Acrobat Reader, it doesn't work at all. Also, Hover Text may pop up when using the modifier key with other keyboard shortcuts. So, your mileage may vary.

Advanced Options Panel

Click the **Advanced...** button to access numerous Zoom adjustments available on the Advanced Settings panel. The available adjustments depend on which Zoom style (Picture-in-picture, Split screen or Full screen) has been selected. We'll focus on those for Picture-in-picture.

For all Zoom modes, the Advanced Options panel has three tabs: **Appearance**, **Controls** and **Follow Focus**. (See the image of the Advanced Options panel for the Picture-in-picture Zoom mode on the next page.) There are too many settings to discuss in this presentation, so let's focus on a few of them.

Appearance Tab



**Zoom Adjustments (Advanced... Button)
Advanced Panel – "Appearance" Tab**

The **Appearance tab** has two sections:

When zoomed in, the screen image moves. The first section under the Appearance tab allows you to change how Zoom window is moved:

Continuously With Pointer. As the pointer is moved about the screen, the Zoom rectangle moves with it until the pointer reaches an edge of the screen.

Only When the Pointer Reaches an Edge. When the pointer reaches an edge of the Zoom window, the window is moved. Until then, the Zoom window is stationary. So, you move the Zoom window by pushing the pointer against its edges. This might be handy for precise positioning of the Zoom window.

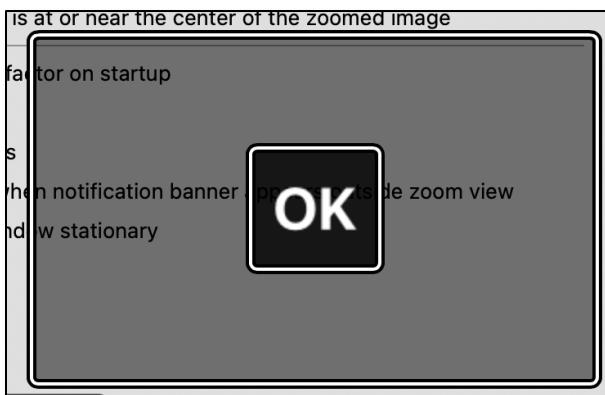
So the Pointer is At or Near the Center of the Zoomed Image. With this setting, the pointer is always at the center of the Zoom window until the window gets to a corner or edge of the screen. Then the pointer continues to move, but the Zoom window stops at the edge of the screen.

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Bottom section under the Appearance tab. This section contains additional adjustment features. Here's a brief summary:

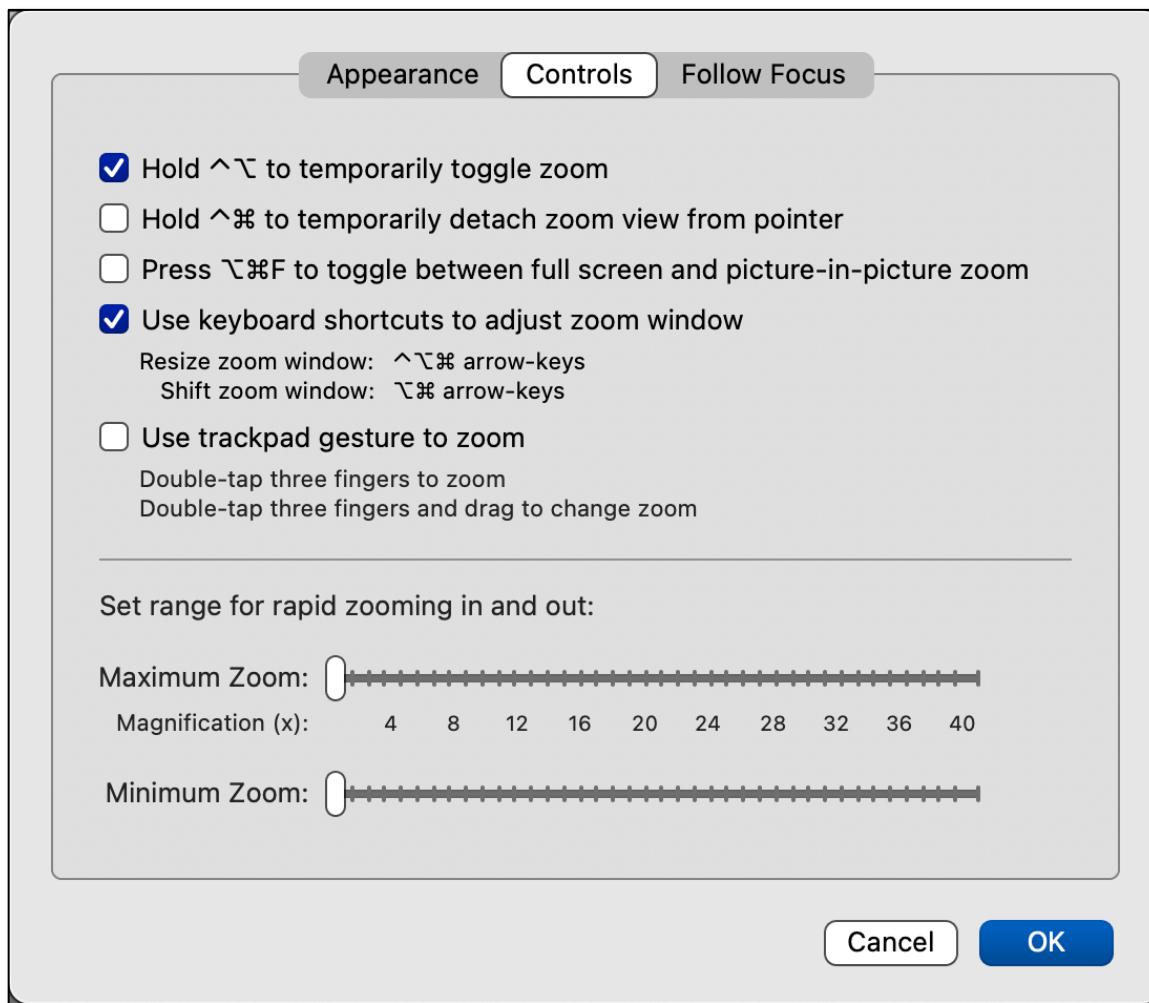
- **Restore Zoom Factor on startup** will apply your current zoom factor whenever you turn on zoom or start up your Mac.
- Click the **Invert colors** option to have the colors inverted in the zoom area.
- With the **Smooth images** option unselected, the pixels are a lot clearer when zooming in. Turning the option off smooths out the magnified area.
- **Flash screen when notification banner appears outside zoom view** will flash the screen when a notification appears and it's not in the zoom window.
- **Keep zoom window stationary** will keep the zoom window fixed in one location on the screen while the pointer is moved to magnify another portion of the screen.

There's also a **Adjust Size and Location** button. Click it to show an image of the Zoom window. Drag any edge or corner to adjust the size of the Zoom window. You can also position the Zoom window anywhere on the screen, handy when combined with the **Keep zoom window stationary** option. When you're satisfied with the size, click the **OK** button.



**Zoom Adjustments (Advanced... Button) – Appearance Tab
Adjust Size and Location Zoom Window Image**

Controls Tab



Zoom Adjustments (Advanced... Button) Advanced Panel – "Controls" Tab

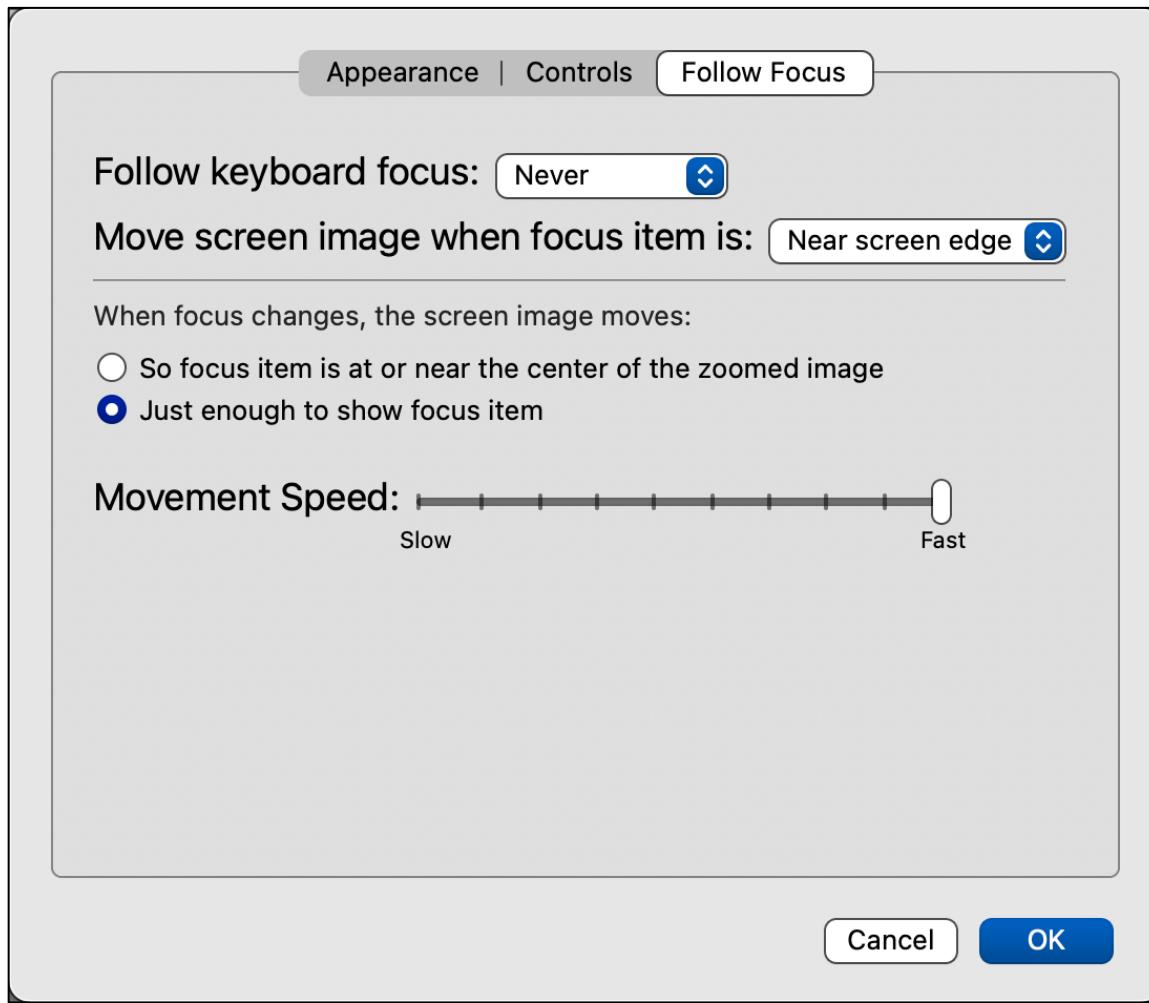
The **Controls tab** has two sections:

Upper section under the Controls tab. Here there are checkboxes for several features. These two are probably the most useful:

- Hold ⌘⌥ to temporarily toggle zoom.** Press the **Control + Option** keys when you just want a quick Zoom glance and are OK with the existing Zoom level.
- Use keyboard shortcuts to adjust zoom window.** With this setting, you can change the size of the zoom window by pressing the **⌘⌥** modifier key combination (**Control + Option + Command**) along with one of the arrow keys (**↑, ↓, ←, or →**).

Set range for rapid zooming in and out. Here you can set the maximum and minimum levels of magnification.

Follow Focus Tab



Zoom Adjustments (Advanced... Button) Advanced Panel – "Follow Focus" Tab

Focus was introduced in macOS Monterey as a means to keep you from interrupted by instant messages, alerts, etc. allowing you to focus on whatever you're doing on your Mac. In Zoom mode, the term *Focus* means to have Zoom activity follow keyboard activity.

The purpose of the **Follow Focus tab** is to adjust various Focus settings. Without going into detail, simply know that you can adjust when keyboard focus is used, how the Zoom image is moved when typing, etc.

Other Zoom Options

While the Zoom feature in macOS has considerable capability, you have other "zooming" options. For example, many apps have a full screen zoom feature (often called Zoom In/Out, Make Bigger/Smaller, etc.) to enlarge or shrink the display of the entire page for better readability.

Also, don't forget about the Reader View in Safari. On many webpages, this can strip out the extraneous material, allowing you to focus on the text of an article.

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In addition, a few Zoom apps (not to be confused with the Zoom meeting app) are found on the Mac App Store. I still use one called **Zoom It** from 2017. It still works well in macOS Monterey, but unfortunately, the developer has stopped supporting it. Even so, I'm now using the **Control + Option** modifier key combination in macOS Zoom for quick zooms.

Summary

The Zoom feature in macOS has considerable capability, features, and adjustability for magnifying what's on your screen—far more than I suspect most of us will need. Nevertheless, Zoom and its features there should you find yourself in need of additional capability.

Next Presentation

For the next presentation, we'll take a look another macOS feature.

Have a favorite Mac Tip or utility? Please feel free to pass it along, and I'll see if I can work it into a future presentation.

If you have any suggestions for presentation topics, including macOS utilities, please contact me at slp4668@gmail.com.

-Steve Parker

Credits:

1. https://macmost.com/how-to-use-screen-zoom-on-a-mac.html?awt_a=2P.a&awt_l=CXcqh&awt_m=Igrim08zHh8I.a
2. <https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT210978>