Sound Equalization and iTunes Display Settings

When sound engineers mix a song, they mix multiple tracks to create the finished song. All of the tracks in a song are mixed down to two stereo tracks. Then the engineers make a decision as to how to equalize the song. When sound engineers equalize a song, they can boost or decrease individual frequencies. For example, if the bass sound range is a little weak, they can boost the bass frequencies to give the music more presence. Sound engineers generally work with a 20-band graphic equalizer, which enables them to precisely control each frequency.

When you listen to a song in iTunes, you hear the result of the sound engineer's hard work. Even though you may like the song, however, your speakers may not be the type for which the sound engineers optimized the mix. Or you may like your music with more bass or treble. To allow for personalized listening, iTunes has a built-in 10-band graphic equalizer, a device that enables you to fine-tune the sound of a song to your liking.

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Adjust Sound with the iTunes Equalizer

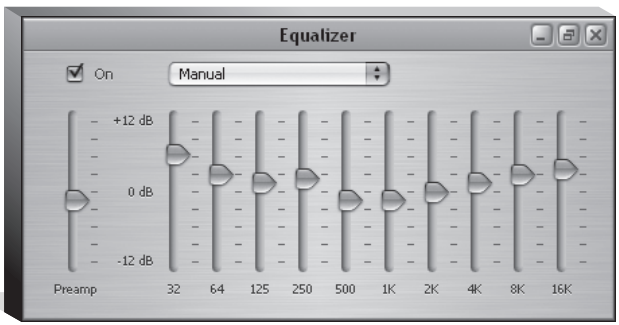
The iTunes equalizer is accessed by clicking a button at the bottom of the iTunes interface. After opening the equalizer, you can choose one of the presets to suit the style of music to which you are listening. You have 22 presets from which to choose. And if you cannot find a preset to your liking, you can modify a preset to suit your tastes and then save it for future use. You can adjust the equalizer while a song is playing.

Assign an Equalizer Preset to a Song

You can also assign an *equalizer preset* (equalizer settings for a specific music genre such as rock 'n' roll or jazz) to a song. This is a wonderful option when you have several genres of songs in your iTunes music library. You can assign the applicable preset to a song. When the song plays, it will sound just the way you like.

Adjust Equalizer Settings while a Song Plays

You can display the equalizer when a song is playing. When you do this, you can fine-tune the settings for a specific song or specific genre of music. You can adjust the equalizer setting to boost or decrease 10 frequencies. When you boost or decrease a frequency, you reshape the sound curve. In other words, if you connect all of the equalizer slider bars, you come up with a curve that represents how the frequencies have been adjusted. When you find an equalizer setting you like, you can save it for future use. You can also edit the presets list. If you are no longer using a preset, you can delete it from the list.



iTunes Visual Effects

iTunes is a great way to relax while doing other work on your computer. And when you need a break from the other work you are doing on your computer, you can turn to iTunes for visual stimulation. iTunes has built-in visual effects that look similar to the light shows used by rock groups in the late '60s and early '70s. You can display visual effects in a small, medium, or large window. And, if you really want to turn off your mind, relax, and float downstream, you can view visual effects in full screen mode.

ITunes Equalizer Presets

Each music genre has specific characteristics. Rock 'n' Roll has a heavy bass beat, while Jazz features soaring saxophone solos, and sometimes flutes. Classical music features the timbre of stringed instruments. iTunes has equalizer presets for specific music genres. The preset alters the output of each frequency range to suit the specific genre for which it was created.

Create Custom Equalizer Presets

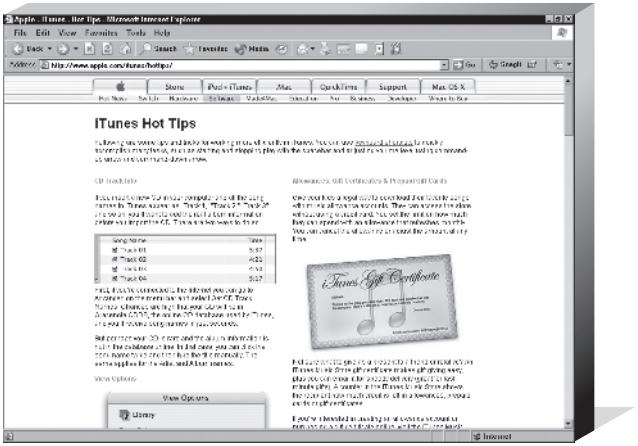
You can modify equalizer presets to suit your listening preference. When you modify an equalizer preset, you drag the frequency sliders to alter the output of each frequency until the music sounds good to you. You can also change the setting of the Preamp slider, which changes the volume of the song before any equalization is applied. After modifying a preset to suit your taste, you can save it as a custom preset.

Create a Party Shuffle

iTunes enables you to shuffle playlists, and, for that matter, your entire music library. You can also create what is known as a *Party Shuffle.* If desired, you can have a Party Shuffle open in a different window, and display the upcoming songs in the shuffle. You can change the songs as needed if they do not fit the type of party you are hosting. For example, a classical piece would not fit in with a dance party.

Access iTunes Hot Tips

iTunes is a work in progress. The Apple engineers will come up with new and enhanced features, and new versions of iTunes will become available on a regular basis. The iPod is also a work in progress. The iPod photo now gives you the ability to view photos while listening to music. In the future, may be able to view video on your iPod. To keep up with the latest and greatest tips and information on the iPod, you can regularly visit the iTunes section of the Apple Web site. When you are connected to the Internet, you can get the latest tips from within iTunes using the iTunes Hot Tips menu command. This launches the Hot Tips section of the iTunes Web site, which like iTunes and iPod is a work in progress.



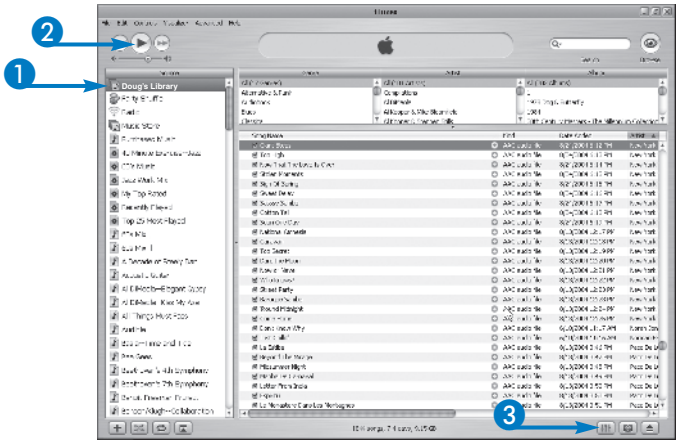
Adjust the iTunes Equalizer

You can use the graphic equalizer in iTunes to compensate for room acoustics, furniture that soaks up sound, and loudspeaker frequency response. You can enable the iTunes equalizer and then choose from one of the presets. You can also manually adjust the equalizer to fine-tune an equalizer setting. When creating a custom equalizer setting, begin with an existing preset that gives you a reasonable facsimile of the sound you desire. Then you adjust the individual sliders to get the exact sound you desire. The marks at the bottom of the equalizer are the individual frequencies you can adjust. The lowest frequency is 32 Hz (hertz) and the highest frequency is 16,000 Hz. The range of human hearing is 20 Hz to 20,000 Hz. The marks on the Preamp slider are measures of dB (decibels). You can boost or decrease the volume of a song before the frequency sliders interact with the sound. Each tick mark represents 3 dB. You can boost or decrease a song's volume by 12 dB. You can also adjust the *preamp*, which boosts or decreases the volume before the frequencies are adjusted. After creating a preset, you can save it for future use.

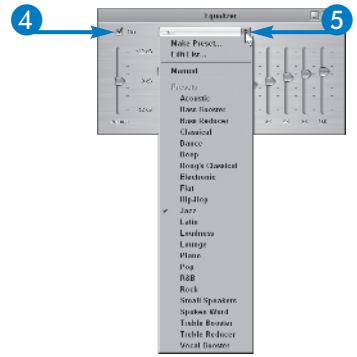
Adjust the iTunes Equalizer

1. Select a playlist in the Source list.
2. Click ▶.
3. Click the Equalizer button (🎚).

   iTunes displays the equalizer.



4. Click On to enable the equalizer (☐ changes to ☑).
5. Click here and select a preset.



Fine-Tune the Tone

6 Drag the Preamp slider up or down.

Dragging upward boosts volume and downward decreases it. As soon as you modify a preset, the preset heading changes to Manual.

7 Drag sliders ( ) to hone the sound to your liking.

Sliders on the left adjust the bass frequencies, the middle sliders adjust the midrange, and rightmost sliders adjust the treble frequencies.

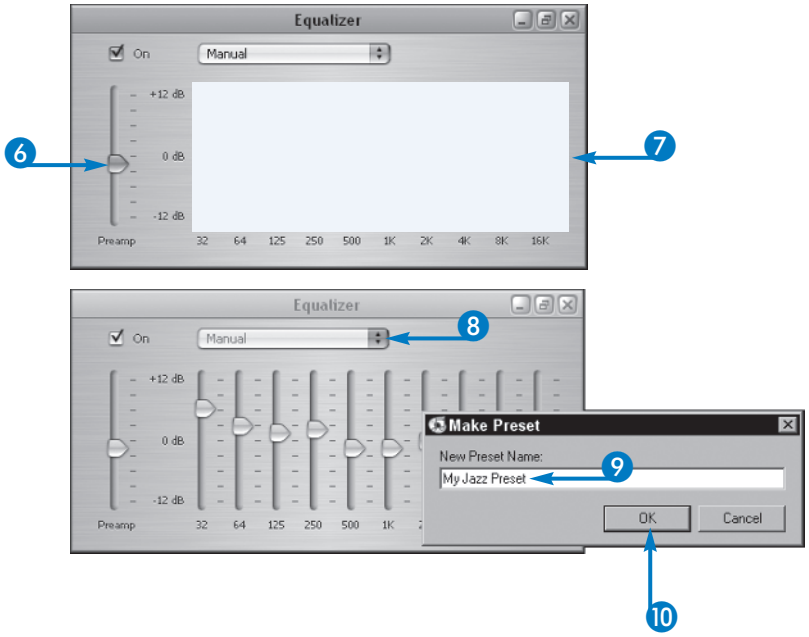
Save a Preset

8 Click here and select Make Preset.

The Make Preset dialog box appears.

9 Type a name for the preset.

10 Click OK to save the preset.



PART IV

Can I delete the presets I do not use?

Yes. Click the current preset and choose Edit List to open the Edit Presets dialog box. Select the preset you want to delete and then press the Delete button. After you delete unneeded presets, click the Done button.

Can I overboost the volume of a song?

Yes. While adjusting the Preamp slider, listen carefully. If the sound becomes distorted, you have boosted the volume of the song too much. This clips the sound, causing certain frequencies to distort and muddy the sound.

Set an Equalizer Preset to a Song

If you have a large library of tunes in your iTunes music library, your collection probably spans many genres. Each genre of music has specific characteristics. For example, Hip-hop music has heavy bass. You can accentuate the characteristics of a genre by using an equalizer preset. However, enabling the iTunes equalizer and then changing the preset every time you play an album or playlist can be annoying. If you are letting iTunes shuffle your music, changing presets is downright inconvenient. However, you can assign an equalizer preset to a song. You can use any of the iTunes presets or a preset that you have created and added to the list. When you have the equalizer enabled and a song to which you have assigned an equalizer preset plays, iTunes automatically changes the equalizer preset to the one you specified.

I have assigned several presets to songs; yet I notice no difference when they play.

- Make sure you have the equalizer enabled. If you do not have the equalizer enabled, iTunes will change the equalizer preset, but you will not hear the difference until the equalizer is enabled.

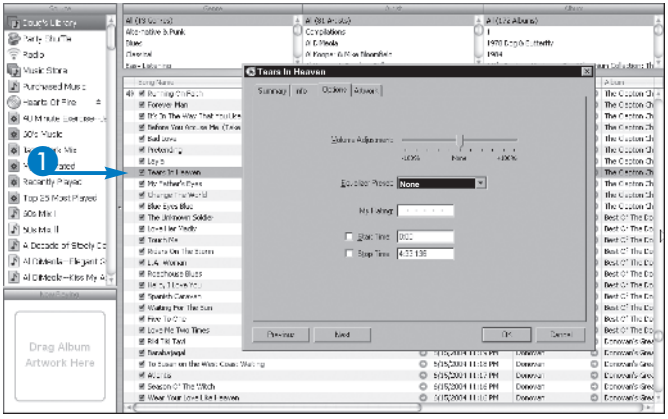
Can I assign an equalizer preset to an entire album?

- Yes. Select all the songs in an album and then follow the previous steps. iTunes displays a warning asking you if you want to edit the info for multiple songs. Click Yes, and then choose the desired equalizer preset from the Multiple Song Information dialog box.

Set an Equalizer Preset to a Song

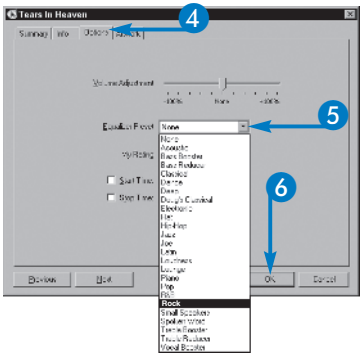
1. Select the desired song from a playlist in the Source list.
2. Click Edit (iTunes on the Mac).
3. Click Get Info.

   The song's dialog box appears, bearing the song title in the title bar.



4. Click the Options tab.
5. Click here and select the desired preset.
6. Click OK.

   iTunes applies your change.



Display iTunes Visual Effects

If you play songs from your iTunes music library for enjoyment, you can display visual effects, which are considerably more artistic than the iTunes interface. iTunes visual effects are animations that fill the iTunes interface. You can display visual effects in three sizes: small, medium, or large. When you choose any of these options, you still have access to all of your iTunes menu commands. If desired, you can display visual effects using the Full Screen option. When you display visual effects full screen, the visual effect fills your monitor screen. The effect is similar to a very cool screensaver set to music. As the visual effect plays, it continually mutates into an ever-evolving pattern of artistic splashes of color.

How do I turn off the visualizer?

You can press Ctrl+T (Windows) or Command+T (Macintosh). An alternative method is to press the Esc key, or click the mouse button.

Are there keyboard shortcuts for the visualizer?

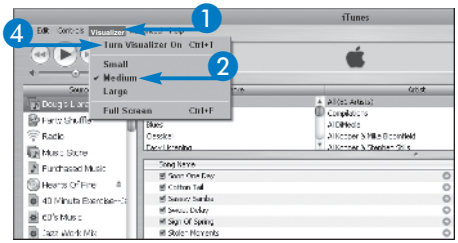
Yes. Press Ctrl+T (Windows) or Command+T (Macintosh) to show or hide the visualizer. Press Ctrl+F (Windows) or Command+F (Macintosh) to switch to Full Screen mode.

Display iTunes Visual Effects

Play a Visual Effect

1. With music playing, click Visualizer.
2. Click one of the size options.
3. Click Visualizer.
4. Click Turn Visualizer On.

   After selecting one of the size options, the iTunes visualizer takes the place of the Source list and iTunes window.



Fine-Tune a Visual Effect

5. Click the Options button ( ).

   The Visualizer Options dialog box appears.

   - Clicking here displays the current frames per second.
   - Click here to increase the playback smoothness.
   - Click here to display song info continuously.
   - Click here to view a simpler, blurrier animation.

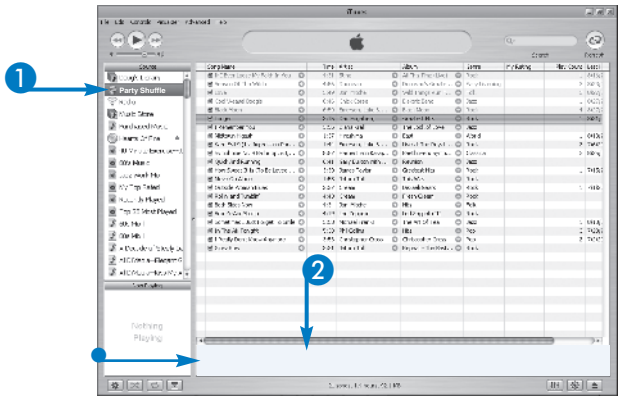
6. Click OK to apply the visualizer options.

Play Songs Randomly with Party Shuffle

If you use Apple AirPort Express to network your computer to other stereo components in your home, you can use iTunes to entertain your guests during a party. Selecting Party Shuffle in the Source list changes the iTunes window in a way that lets iTunes mix up a playlist for a greater variety of music. At the bottom of the iTunes window you select the source for the Party Shuffle, as well as the number of previously played songs and the number of upcoming songs that are displayed. You can choose any playlist as the source for your Party Shuffle. However, you will get the greatest variety of songs if you choose your entire library as the Party Shuffle source.

Play Songs Randomly with Party Shuffle

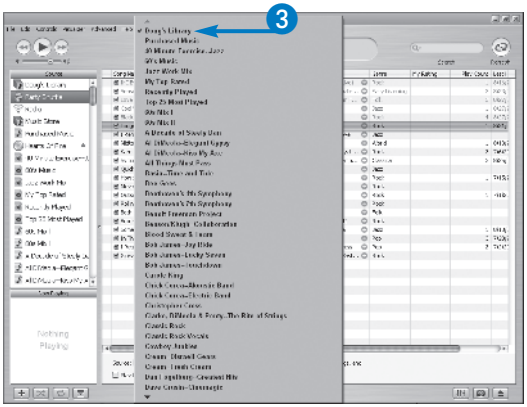
1. Click Party Shuffle in the Source list.
   - iTunes reconfigures the iTunes window.
2. Click here and select the current title.



iTunes displays a list of all playlists.

3. Select the desired playlist.

iTunes randomly chooses songs from the playlist as the source for your Party Shuffle.

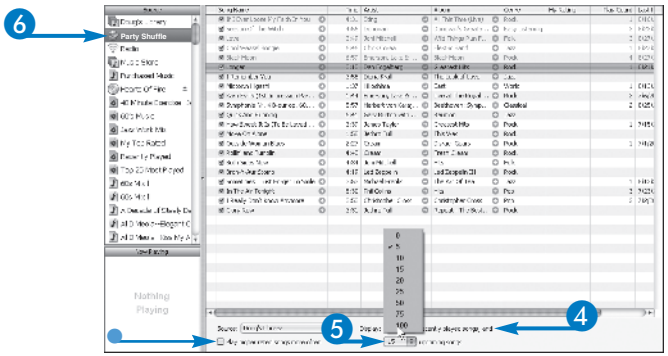


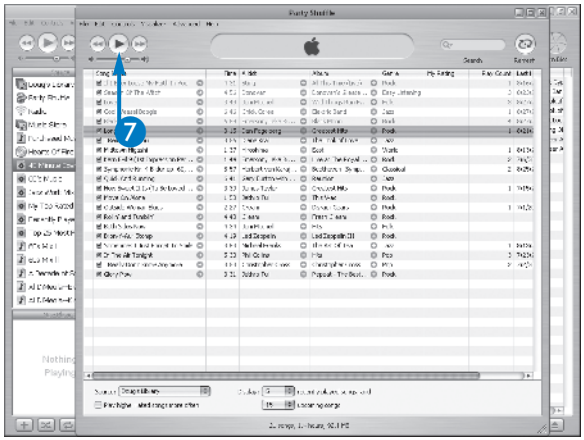
- Click Play higher rated songs more often (☐ changes to ☑) if you want iTunes to choose higher rated songs more often than others.

4. Click here and select how many recently played songs you want displayed in the iTunes window.
5. Click here and select how many upcoming songs chosen by iTunes will be displayed in the iTunes window.
6. Double-click Party Shuffle.

   iTunes opens the Party Shuffle list in a separate window.
7. Click ▶.

   iTunes plays your Party Shuffle selection.





I am not crazy about the upcoming songs that iTunes has selected for my Party Shuffle. What can I do?

Click the Refresh button in the upper-right corner of the iTunes window, or Party Shuffle window if you have opted to display the Party Shuffle in its own window. When you click this button, iTunes chooses different songs for the upcoming songs in your Party Shuffle. You can click this button as often as needed until iTunes displays upcoming songs that you want to hear.

Can I change the source for my iTunes Party Shuffle while the Party Shuffle is playing?

Absolutely. In fact, this is an excellent way to let the music match the mood and ambience of your party. While you are serving drinks or dinner, you can choose a playlist that consists of light jazz or soft classical music. Then when dinner is over, you can choose a playlist that is comprised of upbeat tunes for dancing. When the party is starting to wind down, you can choose a playlist that contains mellow songs that allow for quiet conversation or farewell greetings as you usher your guests to the door.

Download Album Art

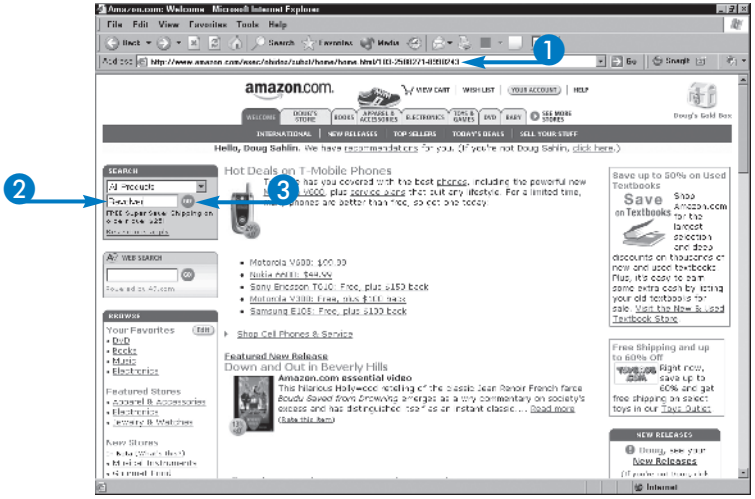
When you add tunes from an audio CD to your iTunes music library, iTunes does not download album artwork. This option is only available when you purchase music from the iTunes Music Store. You can display any image currently stored on your computer as album artwork as noted previously in Chapter 13. However, if you want to use the actual album art commissioned by the record company for the album, you will have to find it online.

Many online music stores display album covers. However, your best bet for finding online artwork is using one of the online bookstores such as Amazon.com or Barnes & Noble (BN.com). In addition to selling books, they also sell music CDs. After searching for the desired album, you can download a picture of the album cover to your computer. This section shows you how to download album artwork from Amazon.com. You can find additional online resources for album artwork in this book's appendix.

Download Album Art

1. Log on to the Internet and navigate to **www.amazon.com**.
2. Type the name of the album in the Search field.
3. Click Go.

   Amazon displays the search results.

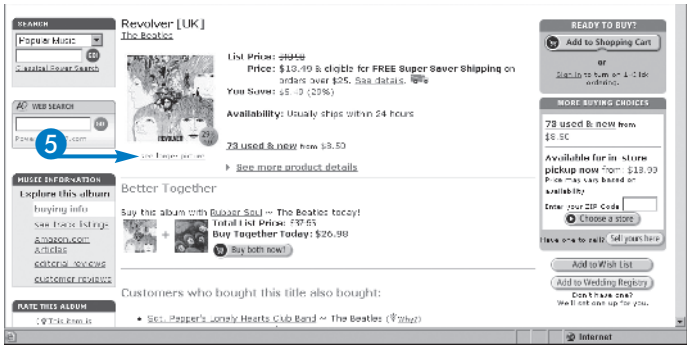


4. Click the album.

   The album information page loads.

5 Click the link to see a larger picture.

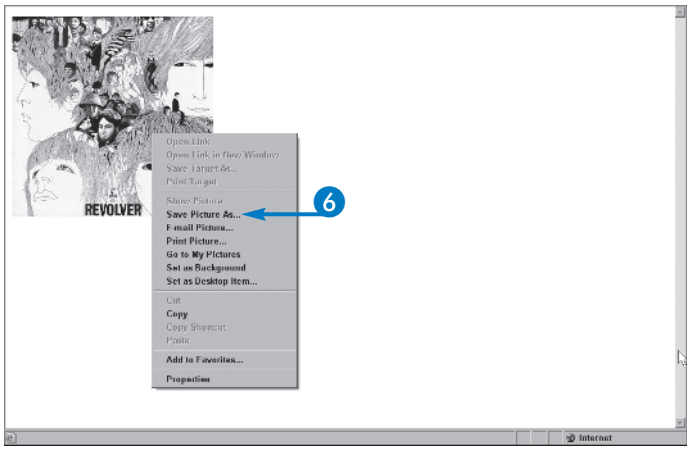
A large version of the album cover loads in your browser window.



6 In Windows, right-click and select Save Picture As.

In Mac OS, Control-click and select Download image to disk.

7 Follow the prompts to download the picture to your computer.



MASTER IT

What folder should I save my album artwork in?

You can save album artwork in any folder. After you associate an image with a song, it becomes part of the song's metadata and can be deleted from your computer. You can right-click (Windows) or Control-click (Macintosh) album artwork and choose Copy from the contextual menu. You can then paste the album artwork into an image editing application.

Can I download album artwork from the iTunes Music Store?

No. None of the artwork shown in the iTunes Music Store displays a contextual menu when right-clicked (Windows) or Control-clicked (Macintosh). However, album artwork is automatically attached to the song's information as metadata.

Hide or Show Album Artwork

By default, iTunes displays any artwork associated with a song in the artwork area in the lower-left corner of the iTunes interface. Album artwork gives you a visual representation of the album that includes the song currently playing. You can hide the album artwork at any time. Hiding album artwork comes in handy when you have a long list in the Source list and want to display more of it. When you hide album artwork, the entire artwork area in the lower-left corner of the iTunes interface disappears. This increases the height of the Source list, enabling you to view more items. When desired, you can show the album artwork by clicking a button.

Can I enlarge the album artwork in iTunes?

Yes. Move your cursor over the dividing line between the album artwork area and the iTunes window. When your cursor becomes a hand, click and drag to the right to enlarge the album artwork.

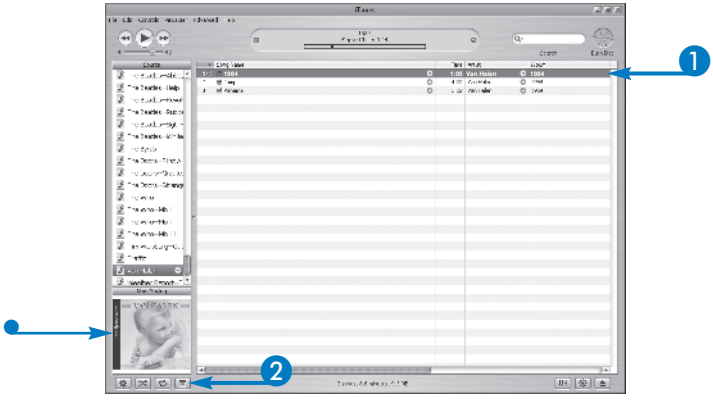
Is there another way I can display the album artwork?

Yes. Click the album artwork once to display a full size version of the album artwork in another window. This displays the album artwork indefinitely until you click the Close button.

Hide or Show Album Artwork

Hide Album Artwork

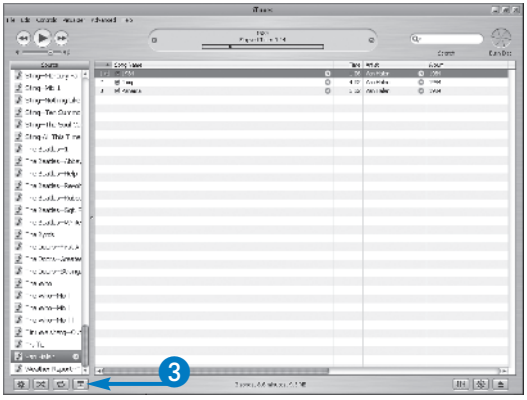
1. Play a song with album artwork.
   - Album artwork appears here.
2. Click the Show or hide song artwork button ( ).
   - iTunes hides the album artwork.



Show Album Artwork

3. Click again.

   iTunes displays the album artwork.



Shuffle iTunes Playback

Variety is the spice of life. iTunes gives you variety in spades. You can create your own unique playlists by mixing and matching songs from different albums. However, even playlists become predictable after a while. You can spice things up by shuffling the playback. When you shuffle playback, iTunes selects the songs in random order. You can shuffle a playlist, or your entire music library. You can play back the songs in their original order at any time. You can also shuffle playback of a specific category of songs, such as artist, genre, or album.

How can I use shuffle playback to spice up a party?

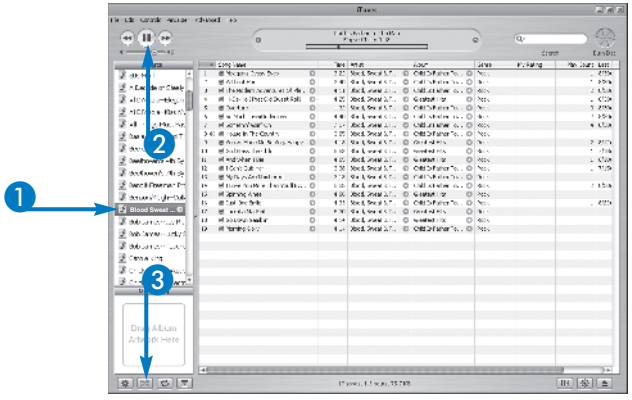
Create a playlist of your favorite tunes that lasts the length of your party. Begin playing the playlist and then click the Turn shuffle on or off button to shuffle the playback of your new playlist.

Can I shuffle a specific category of songs?

Yes. Click the Browse button to display the Browse pane. You can then select a genre, artist, or album. Begin playing the selection of songs and then click the Turn shuffle on or off button.

Shuffle iTunes Playback

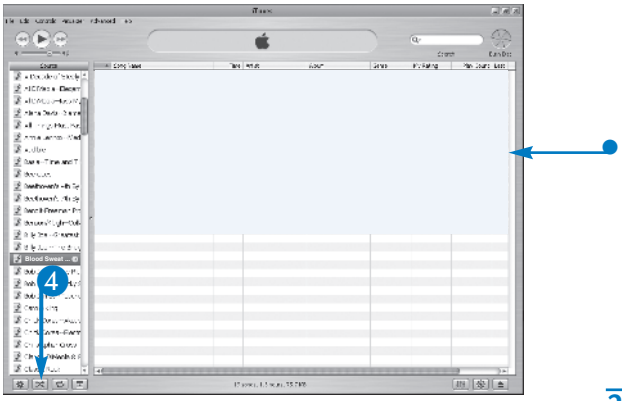
1. Click the desired playlist.
2. Click .
3. Click the Turn shuffle on or off button ( ).



- iTunes shuffles the playback of the selected playlist and the button is highlighted in blue.

4. Click again.

   iTunes plays the songs in their original order beginning with the next song.



Access iTunes Hot Tips

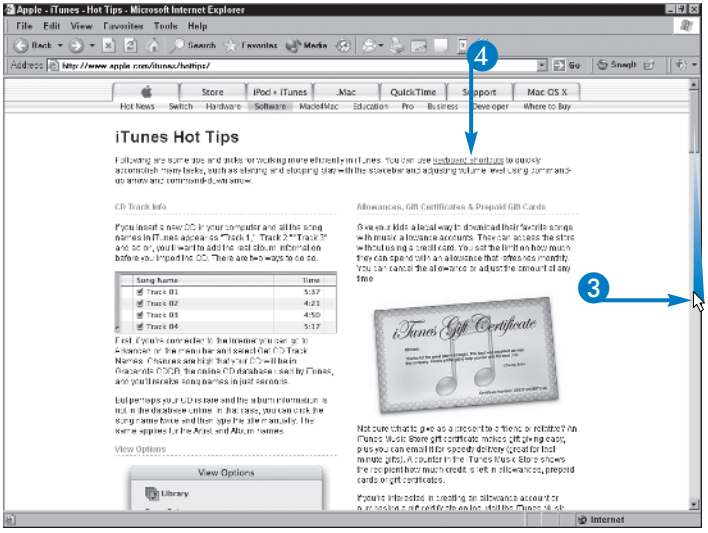
iTunes is a wonderful piece of software. It enables you to organize your iTunes music library, purchase music online, synchronize your iTunes library with your iPod, and so much more. The "so much more" are the little tweaks available in iTunes. Some people call them *Easter Eggs* because they are hidden and not obvious to the casual iTunes user. Of course, an Easter Egg is really undocumented code. These are actually surprises that you can uncover by accessing iTunes Hot Tips. This compilation of information is available at Apple's Web site. But you do not have to surf the Internet to access Hot Tips. As long as you are connected to the Internet, you can launch the iTunes Hot Tips page at Apple's Web site from within iTunes at any time.

Access iTunes Hot Tips

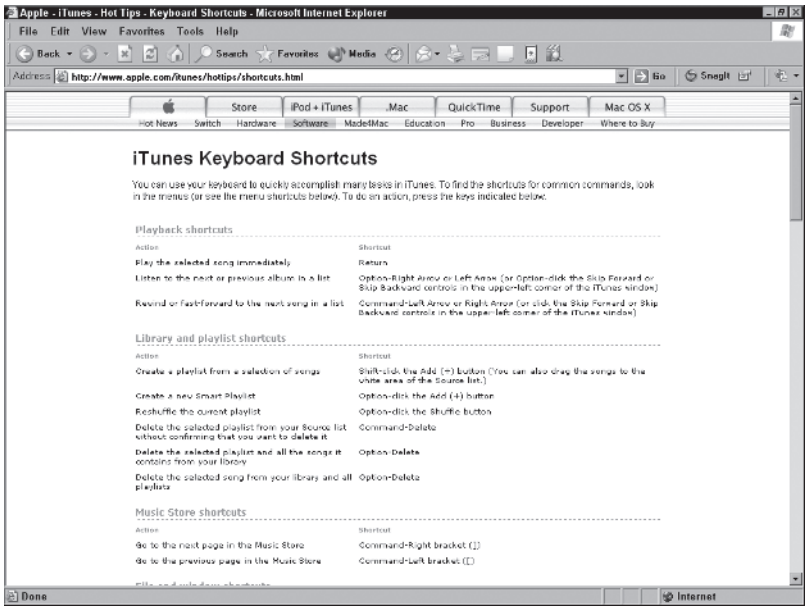
1. Click the Help menu in Windows (iTunes menu on the Macintosh).
2. Click iTunes Hot Tips.

   The Hot Tips page of Apple's Web site is launched in your Web browser.

3. Drag the scroll bar downward to view all the helpful tips.
4. Scroll to the top of the page and click the keyboard shortcuts link.



A list of Macintosh keyboard shortcuts appears.



How do I convert the Macintosh keyboard shortcuts to something I can use in Windows iTunes?

Whenever you see the Return keyboard shortcut, use Enter. If you see Option, the Windows equivalent is Alt, and the Windows equivalent for Command is Ctrl.

Is there another way I can access iTunes Hot Tips?

Yes. You can navigate directly to the Hot Tips page by launching your favorite Web browser and then typing **www.apple.com/itunes/hottips/** in the Address window.

How often are the iTunes Hot Tips updated?

There is no given timetable for updating the Hot Tips section of the site, and there is more information there than you can comfortably digest in one visit. Therefore, you should access the iTunes Hot Tips page whenever you feel like learning more about the application. Chances are that each time you visit you will find some brand new information about an interesting facet of the application. Of course, you should access Hot Tips whenever a new version of iTunes is released.