MultiSwitch from Square One

Welcome to **MultiSwitch from Square One.** MultiSwitchis a text-switching macro that, like all macros, will increase your editing speed and efficiency. This self-paced guide will teach you how to use MultiSwitch.

**Prerequisites:**MultiSwitchis an intermediate macro. To use it, you should already be regularly using macros in your editing and feel comfortable installing macros and assigning them keyboard shortcuts. If not, then please start with the **Macros from Square One** guide to learn these skills:

• Mac: [www.wordmacrotools.com/downloads/MSO\_Mac](https://www.wordmacrotools.com/downloads/MSO_Mac)

• PC: [www.wordmacrotools.com/downloads/MSO\_PC](https://www.wordmacrotools.com/downloads/MSO_PC)

**How to use this document:** Read through the first three sections and then roll your sleeves up and get ready to start learning and practising the new skills. You may want to get together with a couple of other editors to learn together; two or three heads are often better than one.

If you want to **share this document** with a colleague (please do!), it would be best to share the download link, as this will ensure that they have the most up-to-date version:

• [www.wordmacrotools.com/downloads/MSSO](https://www.wordmacrotools.com/downloads/MSSO)

A note on style: Although this document follows UK style conventions, because editors around the world use MultiSwitch, examples are shown using other styles as well.

# MultiSwitch – an introduction

MultiSwitch is a text-replacing (switching) macro. It helps you correct text mistakes that are situational, or context dependent. You can also think of it as a local find-and-replace tool, as opposed to a global find-and-replace tool.

There are two kinds of mistakes in a document:

• Global mistakes where the error is the same across the entire document, such as misspelling ‘Beverley’ as ‘Beverly’. These can be corrected with a global find-and-replace.

• Situational mistakes where the surrounding text dictates whether there is an error. For instance, ‘maybe’ and ‘may be’ are both correct expressions depending on how they are used. You use the text surrounding ‘maybe’/‘may be’ to determine if there is a mistake, such as in ‘The water maybe too cold for swimming’. You correct these mistakes one at a time as you come upon them.

MultiSwitch is designed to correct situational mistakes, such as changing ‘maybe’ to ‘may be’ in the prior example. If you were to do a global find-and-replace to change all instances of ‘maybe’ to ‘may be’, you’d likely introduce errors. So MultiSwitch is ideal for making edits when a global find-and-replace can’t be used.

To use MultiSwitch, you need to learn some new information and skills:

• The types of changes MultiSwitch can make.

• How to tell MultiSwitch what changes you want it to make.

The rest of this document will teach you these skills.

# What type of edits is MultiSwitch suited for?

MultiSwitch is designed to be used while you are editing. You run it any time you come across a word or phrase that needs to be *switched* to another word or phrase.

For example, you can use MultiSwitch to switch one word for another in these common situations:

• Correcting frequently confused words, such as *complement* and *compliment*.

• Spelling out abbreviations, such as changing ‘m.’ to ‘miles’.

• Abbreviating words, such as replacing ‘inches’with ‘in.’

• Applying diacritical marks, such as replacing ‘facade’ with ‘façade’.

• Inserting symbols, such as replacing an ‘x’ with the multiplication symbol ‘×’.

• Editing wordy phrases, such as changing ‘is able to’ to ‘can’.

You might be wondering why you can’t make these changes using Word’s Find and Replace box. You certainly could. However, when a change isn’t global, and so you can’t use Replace All, you have to scroll through every single instance and read the context to assess if a change is warranted. MultiSwitch flips the process around. You wait until you come upon an error *while you are editing*, and then run MultiSwitch to correct it. It is quicker and less disruptive for your brain to identify errors while editing because you’re already immersed in the meaning and flow of the sentence.

# How does MultiSwitch know what to change?

MultiSwitch does not come with any preloaded data about what words should be switched. You give it a list – called a ‘Switch list’ – of what you want it to change. A Switch list is simply a Word document that lists the individual terms you want MultiSwitch to change and what you want the macro to switch them to.

The file name for the Switch list must always be zzSwitchList.docx. So you will create and maintain one Switch list for all projects.

You need to keep your Switch list open while you are editing, so MultiSwitch can locate the file.

These are just the basics for now. More is to come about how to set up a Switch list. First, let’s practise a bit with MultiSwitch to see what it can do.

# See what MultiSwitch can do – exercise #1

Rather than trying to describe what MultiSwitch is capable of, learn how it works by running it on sample text – provided below. Note that for this exercise, we have already created the Switch list for you (see step #4 below). Later you will learn how to set up a Switch list yourself.

Follow these steps:

1. If you haven’t already, install MultiSwitch. You can access the code here: [www.wordmacrotools.com/macros/M/MultiSwitch](https://www.wordmacrotools.com/macros/M/MultiSwitch.txt).

2. Assign it a keyboard shortcut.

3. Turn on Track Changes in this document.

4. Download and open this file: [zzSwitchList](https://www.wordmacrotools.com/downloads/zzSwitchList). Do NOT rename this file.

5. With the cursor standing inside each of the below words in grey (*no need to select the entire word*), run MultiSwitch using its keyboard shortcut. If you need to edit a phrase, place the cursor inside the first word.

\* For now, ignore the text in the zzSwitchList.docx file. Shortly you will learn what it means and how to set up your own Switch list.

Scenario 1: An author inconsistently used the wrong form of back up/backup throughout a document, so you have to assess each instance as you are editing. Tip: When there is more than one word, as in the second example, the cursor must be placed in the first word.

**Ex 1a:** The architect situated the house to backup to the forest.

**Ex 1b:** The designer placed a back up of the architectural plans on Dropbox.

Scenario 2: You need to remove contractions.

**Ex 2a:** Construction on the house can’t begin until the permits are granted.

**Ex 2b:** The architect hasn’t yet completed the design of the kitchen expansion.

Scenario 3: You need to spell out ‘e.g.’ when it appears outside of parentheses. Tip: The macro interprets the ‘e’ as a word (because of the period), so make sure the cursor is before or just after the ‘e’.

**Ex 3a:** The new development offers much-needed missing-middle housing, e.g., duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, and courtyard buildings.

Scenario 4: You need to spell out abbreviations.

**Ex 4a:** The architect debated the benefits of building the homes in a tight cluster on small lots surrounded by green space vs. on an acre of land with a small playground for the community space.

**Ex 4b:** The size of the average home in the new development is 80 m2.

Scenario 5: You need to spell out numbers below 10.

**Ex 5a:** The houses in the neighbourhood were built between 3 and 20 years ago.

Scenario 6: An author has overused the phrase ‘on the other hand’, and you need to change some instances to ‘however’. Remember to place the cursor inside the *first* word.

**Ex 6a:** On the other hand, the design of the office building won numerous awards.

**Ex 6b:** The occupants of the office building, on the other hand, complained that the spaces were not designed to the human scale.

Scenario 7: You’ve developed a list of commonly confused words that you frequently need to correct. Use MultiSwitch to make those edits for you.

Ex 7a: The design guidelines were developed to insure the architectural consistency of the historic neighborhood.

Ex 7b: The architectural review board admonished the developer for trying to flaunt the guidelines.

# Key takeaways from exercise #1

Let’s summarize what exercise #1 demonstrates about MultiSwitch:

• You run MultiSwitch at the moment you want to make a *specific* edit. Because it does not make global changes, you don’t have to worry that MultiSwitch will introduce errors throughout your document.

• You communicate your changes to MultiSwitch through a Switch list, which you can customize to your projects and working style. You will learn how to create a Switch list shortly.

• MultiSwitch changes the text exactly where the cursor stands – so you can instantly see the edit it made. If it didn’t make the change you expected, you can easily undo the edit – and then revise your Switch list entry so that it will make the edit you want.

• To use MultiSwitch, the Switch list must be open and the file name must be zzSwitchList.docx.

• Place the cursor anywhere inside the word you want to be changed and run MultiSwitch using its keyboard shortcut. If the word has internal punctuation, like the periods in ‘e.g.’, the first word is defined as what falls to the left of the first punctuation mark.

• MultiSwitch saves you time by deleting the word(s) for you and typing the replacement word(s) – and it doesn’t make typos. You also don’t need to select the word(s) you want it to change, reducing the strain on your hands and wrists.

# How to create a Switch list

Remember, MultiSwitch is not pre-programmed with information about what words it should switch. You communicate what you want it to change through a Word document called a Switch list, which lists the words you want to delete (the find elements) and their replacements. It’s easy to set up by following these rules:

1. Each find element is placed on the first line, and its corresponding replace element is on the next line, separated by a hard return.

2. Place a blank line between each find-and-replace pair.

*Let’s look at this in more detail*: Open the zzSwitchList.docx file you downloaded for Exercise #1 and look at the entries for the first exercise – they are listed on the first page in order of the scenarios. Compare the edits you made in Exercise #1 to the entries in the Switch list. Note how each pair is grouped. Here is an explanation of some of the Switch list entries:

Scenario 1: Note that there are separate entries to switch ‘backup’ to ‘back up’ and ‘back up’ to ‘backup’. But MultiSwitch doesn’t get confused about which term you want it to switch to. Why? Because you run the macro at the exact place in a document where a particular change is needed. It scans the Switch list looking for an exact match for that one term.

Scenario 6: Note that there are separate entries for ‘On the other hand’ and for ‘on the other hand’. MultiSwitch is **case-sensitive**, meaning that you must create separate Switch list entries for uppercase and lowercase terms, if applicable.

# Practise creating Switch list entries – exercise #2

Create a Switch list entry for each of these scenarios. When you have completed the exercise, see the [answer key](#miniExercise1) at the end of this document. If you want to check your answers before looking at the answer key, add them to the zzSwitchList.docx file and test them out by creating some sample text.

1. Replace ‘farther’ with ‘further’.

2. Change ‘one hundred’ to a numeral.

3. Abbreviate centimetres.

4. Be able to correct every instance (lowercase and uppercase) when an author confuses ‘choose’ for ‘chose’ and vice versa.

5. Change & to ‘and’.

6. Convert the letter ‘x’ to a true multiplication symbol. (You can find a multiplication symbol by clicking on the symbol icon (Ω) on the Insert tab of the ribbon and navigating to the font type called ‘Symbol’.)

**Break time!** You’ve learned a lot so far. This is a good place to pause for a bit to let the information sink in. Come back tomorrow or in a few days, refreshed and ready to learn about other MultiSwitch features.

# Additional MultiSwitch features – exercise #3

Exercise #1 demonstrated MultiSwitch’s straightforward text-switching capabilities. Let’s look at some other features MultiSwitch offers by reading about the features and testing them out.

Follow these steps:

1. Turn on Track Changes in this document.

2. Open the zzSwitchList.docx file.

3. Read about each feature below, and then run MultiSwitch on the example sentences.

4. Look at the corresponding Switch list entry to understand how it is configured.

Feature #1: **Turn off tracking for select edits.** Sometimes you don’t need – or want – to track certain straightforward edits, which can unnecessarily clutter a document. For any change you do not want to track, apply a strikeout to the replacement text, such as:

find

~~replace~~

**Ex 1a:** The photo in Fig. 1 shows the streetscape as it looked in 1928.

**Ex 1b:** The block contains multiple art deco, art nouveau & Bauhaus style buildings.

Feature #2: **Choose from a list of replacement text.** Sometimes an author overuses a word or phrase. To vary the language, you can replace different instances with different alternatives. Or an author frequently uses the wrong preposition. To give yourself alternative replacements, list them immediately below the find line, such as:

find

replace1

replace2

replace3

When you run MultiSwitch, it will generate a list of choices in a pop-up box. Type in the number of your selection and select OK.

A green and white rectangular box with a white rectangle

Description automatically generated

**Ex 2a:** The L’Eixample district in Barcelona, designed by Ildefons Cerdà in 1860, is hailed for its progressive urban plan, for example, as a model of modern mixed-use neighborhoods.

**Ex 2b:** Owing to the demolition of the 19th-century structure, the neighbours organized a civic group to lobby for design standards to protect the architectural integrity of the historic district.

Feature #3: **As a text expander.** You can use MultiSwitch to save you time when writing commonly used words, terms, or phrases. For example, if you type ‘toc’ and run MultiSwitch, it will turn it into ‘tableofcontents’. You can also use this feature to insert commonly used queries into comment bubbles – but only if Modern Comments are turned off. When setting up your Switch list, choose a snippet that is short and easy to remember.

**Ex 3a:** You are finding yourself frequently writing ‘tableofcontents’. Instead, let MultiSwitch do it. On the next line, type the letters ‘toc’ and run MultiSwitch.

Type text here:

**Ex 3b:** You frequently query the author to verify your edits. Let MultiSwitch type the comment for you. Insert a comment bubble **here** and inside type ‘ec’ and then run MultiSwitch, which will write out ‘Edits for clarity. Please revise as you wish.’[[1]](#footnote-2)

Feature #4: **To apply basic formatting.** You can apply italics, bold, colouring, and highlighting to the replacement text.

**Ex 4a:** On the next line, type the letters ‘pv’ and run MultiSwitch to see a demonstration of the text expander function with formatting.

Type text here:

# Practise understanding and troubleshooting Switch list entries – exercise #4

Here are some exercises to help you learn about these additional MultiSwitch features. Consult [Appendix 1](#_Appendix_1:_summary) for a summary of the Switch list elements and features. When you’ve completed these exercises, consult the [answer key](#miniExercise2) at the end of this document. If you get stumped, you may want to add these entries to the zzSwitchList.doc file and create sample text to run them on.

**Part A:** Describe what each of the below Switch list entries will change.

1.

he

they

she

they

2.

shall

will

must

has to

have to

3.

em

[paul@wordmacrotools.com](mailto:paul@wordmacrotools.com)

4.

fewer

~~less~~

5.

UK

United Kingdom

6.

im

Does my edit capture your *intended meaning*?

7.

averse

adverse

adverse

averse

8.

Like

As with

like

as with

**Part B:** Describe the error for each of the below Switch List items. How would you refine or correct them?

1.

%

percent

2.

however,

but

3.

since

because

**Break time!** You’re almost done. If you feel saturated with information, take a break to give your brain time to absorb what you’ve learned. Perhaps even spend some time reviewing the material. In the final section, we will review all the important points and talk about incorporating MultiSwitch into your editorial workflow.

# Common questions and tips

Here are answers to the common questions about MultiSwitch:

• **MultiSwitch makes simple edits. How will it save me time?** When you run MultiSwitch, you are transferring the work of making an edit onto the macro so you can stay focused on the meaning and flow of the text. If you were to make the edit yourself, you would have to break your immersion in the sentence as a whole to shift your attention to the keyboard and what you are typing. This disruption increases the chances you will make a typing error or maybe overlook another mistake, and it takes time to get reabsorbed in the sentence.

• **Will MultiSwitch introduce errors?** No. MultiSwitch makes one change, and it makes it right at the spot where your cursor is standing. It does *not* make global changes. So if you run it to change ‘am’ to ‘a.m.’, you don’t have to worry that it will also change the ‘am’ in ‘I am tired when I wake up’. MultiSwitch is authorized to make only one change. But see the next bullet – we humans can cause it to make an error.

• **But MultiSwitch didn’t make the edit I wanted.** MultiSwitch does *exactly* what we *tell* it to do. So if it doesn’t make the edit you expect – or if it beeps at you indicating that it can’t find a corresponding entry – there is something wrong with your Switch list entry. Stop and modify the entry and try again.

• **I don’t know what to put on my Switch list:** When you first use MultiSwitch, your Switch list will likely be short. Over time you can build up a robust master Switch list to use with all your projects. See the next section for tips.

Here are some tips for setting up and maintaining your Switch list:

1. **Start** **populating your list:** One way to start populating your Switch list is to include the commonly confused words you find yourself correcting. Here are some starting points for ideas:

• [Commonly Confused Words](https://www.ciep.uk/assets/files/download/CIEP-factsheet-easily-confused-words.pdf) by CIEP

• [Pairs of one-word and two-word forms](https://www.dailywritingtips.com/20-pairs-of-one-word-and-two-word-forms/)

• Browse the [Eggcorn Database](http://eggcorns.lascribe.net/)

2. **Also add common corrections and conventions:** You probably already have a list – even if it resides only in your mind – of corrections that you commonly make and conventions you need to follow, such as abbreviations, contractions, numbers, and wordy phrases and their concise cousins. Add those to your Switch list.

3. **And add standard comments or other frequently typed items:** Use MultiSwitch as a text expander to type these items for you. Choose short snippets for each piece of standard text.

4. **Add to it over time:** You can add to your Switch list on the fly. Whenever you run across an edit that is ideal for MultiSwitch to make – something that you frequently find yourself fixing – add it to your Switch list. It’s already open anyway. You can build up a robust list over time.

5. **Managing your Switch list:** As your list grows, consider these ways to keep it, and you, organized:

• Keep the list in (roughly) alphabetical order.

• Keep any project-specific entries at the top so you can easily delete them at the end of that project.

6. **One Switch list or more?** Because the code for MultiSwitch requires that the Switch list always be called zzSwitchList.docx, you probably will have just one. But you can create a Switch list for each project, storing it in your project folder. The file name still must be zzSwitchList.docx.

# Video resources

If you would like to see a demonstration of MultiSwitch or want inspiration for different ways that you can use it, check out these videos:

• Paul’s [YouTube video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NtexQ2p7u0) giving an overview of MultiSwitch.

• Another [video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7xfLbh26oE) with tips and tricks.

# Want to learn about MultiSwitch’s cousin – FRedit?

MultiSwitch and FRedit are related. Both are find-and-replace macros. While MultiSwitch works locally, FRedit works globally. It steps in where MultiSwitch isn’t equipped to function, tackling global find and replaces, like those pesky double spaces and making all the dashes consistent. You can learn how to use FRedit through the [FRedit from Square One](http://www.archivepub.co.uk/documents/FSO-instructions) self-tutoring guide. You can also watch [this video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yGZHej6vaZ4) about the difference between the two.

# Good luck!

**Questions? Feedback?** Pleaseemail Paul Beverley: [paul@wordmacrotools.com](mailto:paul@wordmacrotools.com)

Maybe buy us a coffee as a thank-you? [ko-fi.com/MrMacros](http://ko-fi.com/MrMacros)

**Want to learn about one new macro each month, plus tips about using macros?** Sign up for the **Macro of the Month** newsletter:

<https://macroofthemonth.substack.com>

Lead author: Jennifer Yankopolus, [jennifer@wordcollaborative.com](mailto:jennifer@wordcollaborative.com)

Mistakes added by: Paul Beverley, [paul@wordmacrotools.com](mailto:paul@wordmacrotools.com)

version date: 30 May 2024

# Appendix 1: summary of Switch list elements and features

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Switch list entry** | **Result** |
| zzSwitchList.docx | This must be the file name for your Switch List. |
| find  replace | Each find and replace element must be listed on its own line. |
| Find  Replace | MultiSwitch is case-sensitive. So you have to create separate entries for lowercase and uppercase instances – if relevant. |
| find  ~~replace~~ | Strike through the replace element to tell MultiSwitch to not track that change. |
| find  replace1  replace2  replace3 | If a find–replace grouping contains more than one replace item, MultiSwitch will generate a list of options for you to choose from. |
| ­find  Replace with a *long* **comment** | You can apply colour, highlight, italics and bold to the replace text. |
| find  !replace | ! deletes the leading space (see [Appendix 2](#Appendix 2: additional )). |

# Appendix 2: Troubleshooting punctuation and spaces

Some important points about MultiSwitch and punctuation and spaces.

## Punctuation

A Switch list find element may *not* contain leading punctuation. Punctuation is OK in the replacement text. So this Switch list entry would not work:

, which  
that

(You can use the [ThatWhich](https://www.wordmacrotools.com/macros/T/ThatWhich.txt) macro to make this edit.)

## Spaces

1. Spaces in Switch list entries: MultiSwitch won’t pick up spaces *before* or *after* the find word or phrase. Spaces are OK in the replacement text.

For example, you would get an error with this Switch list entry because there is space after ‘principal’. (Turn on the hidden characters using the ¶ symbol on the Home tab to see.) Once you delete that extra space, the entry will work just fine.

principal

principle

2. Deleting a space in the replacement text: You can delete a space at the beginning of the replacement text by inserting ! in the Switch list entry; it tells MultiSwitch to delete the leading space:

find

! replace

For example, the below Switch list entry would change ’10 percent’ to ’10 %’.

percent

%

Instead, you can avoid having a space before the % with this entry:

percent

!%

# Answer Key

### Exercise #2:

1.

farther

further

2.

one hundred

100

Note: to convert every number to any numeral that might arise in a manuscript, you’d have to create a Switch list entry for each number (but you’d only have to set it up once). Or use [NumberToText](https://www.wordmacrotools.com/macros/N/NumberToText.txt), which spells out numbers.

3.

centimetres

cm

4.

choose

chose

Choose

Chose

chose

choose

Chose

Choose

5.

&

and

6.

x

×

### Exercise #4:

**Part A**

1. Changes ‘he’ to singular ‘they’ and ‘she’ to singular ‘they’.

2. Creates a list of options for you to choose from when editing ‘shall’.

3. Replaces ‘em’ with Paul’s email address.

4. Replaces ‘fewer’ with ‘less’ and does NOT track this edit, because in the Switch list ‘less’ has a strikethrough.

5. Replaces ‘UK’ with ‘United Kingdom’.

6. Replaces ‘im’ with ‘Does my edit capture you *intended meaning*?’, including applying italics.

7. Replaces easily confused words: ‘averse’ to ‘adverse’ and vice versa.

8. Replaces ‘like’ with ‘as with’ for both uppercase and lowercase instances.

**Part B**

1. There is no space before ‘percent’, which means 5% would become 5percent. *Solution*: Insert a space before ‘percent’:

%

percent

2. You may want to add a second the entry:

however,

but

Otherwise, you’d end up with an extraneous comma in this sentence:

The roofer used the wrong shingles; but, from the street you can’t tell.

However, it’s good to realize that sometimes you may need to make an additional edit after you run MultiSwitch. A Switch list entry can’t always accommodate the variation in expressions you may run across.

3. There is no error. However, ‘since’ and ‘because’ sometimes fall at the start of a sentence, so you probably want to add the uppercase form to your Switch list:

Since

Because

1. Did Ex 3b fail to work? If the macro did not replace the text in the comment bubble, it means your version of Word is using Modern Comments. Macros, including MultiSwitch, do not work in Modern Comments. You can revert to Classic Comments by following [these instructions](https://answers.microsoft.com/en-us/msoffice/forum/msoffice_word-msoffice_unknown-mso_subother/modern-comments-control-screenshots-for-windows/857ac31e-33f7-4aeb-9fc3-d2224d3e2d37) on Microsoft’s website. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)