pickwise

TECH · UPDATED NOVEMBER 2026

Dock guide

Second screen staying black? We compared USB-C, Thunderbolt and DisplayLink docks that run two monitors from one cable, for Mac and Windows laptops.

The 10 at a glance

#	Dock	Best for	Connection	Video	2 screens on M1/M2 Air
1	CalDigit TS5 Plus	Best overall	Thunderbolt 5	Native	No
2	Anker Prime TB5 Docking Station	Best for standard cables	Thunderbolt 5	Native	No
3	Plugable TBT-UDH2	Best dual HDMI	Thunderbolt 5	Native	No
4	CalDigit TS4	Best Thunderbolt 4	Thunderbolt 4	Native	No
5	Kensington SD5780T	Best value Thunderbolt 4	Thunderbolt 4	Native	No
6	Anker Prime Docking Station (DL7400)	Best for MacBook Air	USB-C	DisplayLink	Yes, with app
7	Plugable UD-6950PDH	Best value DisplayLink	USB-C	DisplayLink	Yes, with app
8	OWC Thunderbolt Go Dock	Best with no power brick	Thunderbolt 4	Native	No
9	UGREEN Revodok Pro 7-in-1	Best budget for Windows	USB-C	MST	No, mirrors
10	Anker 553 USB-C Hub (8-in-1)	Best cheap hub	USB-C	MST	No, mirrors

Quick answers

Why does my second monitor stay black?

Usually because your laptop doesn't support two external screens through that dock. Base M1 and M2 MacBook Airs only support one, and cheap MST hubs only mirror on a Mac.

Can a MacBook Air run two monitors?

M1 and M2 models need a DisplayLink dock. M3 models can run two with the lid closed, and M4 models and later can run two with the lid open.

How to choose a dock for two monitors

Which dock type do you need?

Check your laptop maker's display support page to be sure.

M1 or M2 Air	M3 Air	M4 Air or newer	Windows laptop
One external screen on its own	Two screens, lid closed	Two screens, lid open	Thunderbolt or USB4 port?
DisplayLink	**Thunderbolt**	**Thunderbolt**	**TB or MST**

1 Check what your laptop can do

Your laptop decides how many screens you can run, not just the dock. Base M1 and M2 MacBook Airs support only one external screen on their own. Newer Macs and most Thunderbolt or USB4 Windows laptops can run two.

2 Pick the right type of dock

Thunderbolt docks use your laptop's own graphics and are best for most people. DisplayLink docks use an app to add extra screens on almost any laptop, including older MacBook Airs. MST docks are cheap but only extend screens on supported Windows laptops.

3 Match your monitor cables

Look at the ports on your monitors. If they use HDMI, a dock with two HDMI ports saves you buying adapters. Some premium docks only have Thunderbolt ports, so you'll need the right cables.

4 Check resolution and refresh rate

Two 4K screens at 60Hz is fine for office work on most docks. If you want higher refresh rates or 6K and 8K screens, check the dock and laptop support that exact setup.

5 Make sure it can charge your laptop

Small laptops often need 65W, while bigger ones need 90W to 140W. If the dock can't supply enough, your battery may drain while you work.

6 Buy for the ports you'll use

Count what you plug in every day, such as Ethernet, USB-A devices, an SD card reader and audio. A smaller, cheaper dock is fine if it covers those.

Your checklist

Tick things off as you go.

CHECK YOUR LAPTOP

- [ ] Find your exact model and chip
- [ ] Check how many external screens it supports
- [ ] Check the port type (Thunderbolt, USB4, USB-C)
- [ ] Note your charger's wattage

CHECK YOUR MONITORS

- [ ] Note each monitor's resolution
- [ ] Note the refresh rate you want
- [ ] Check the inputs (HDMI, DisplayPort, USB-C)
- [ ] Count the cables you need

CHOOSE THE DOCK

- [ ] Thunderbolt, DisplayLink or MST?
- [ ] Enough charging for your laptop
- [ ] Ports you use every day
- [ ] Mac: DisplayLink for M1 or M2 Air

SETTING UP

- [ ] Update your laptop first
- [ ] Install DisplayLink Manager if needed
- [ ] Arrange screens in display settings
- [ ] Keep the receipt until it all works

See the full list online

All 10, with pros and cons and who each one suits.

pickwiseguides.com/tech/usb-c-docks-dual-monitors

Open the list

Dock compatibility worksheet

Fill this in before you buy, so the dock matches your laptop, your monitors and your charger.

YOUR LAPTOP

Detail	Yours
Model	
Chip or processor	
Port type (Thunderbolt / USB4 / USB-C)	
External screens supported	
Charger wattage	

YOUR MONITORS

Monitor	Resolution	Refresh rate	Input (HDMI / DP / USB-C)	Cable needed
Monitor 1				
Monitor 2				

DOCK SHORTLIST

Dock	Type (TB / DisplayLink / MST)	Outputs	Charging (W)	Works with my setup?

NOTES