EcomLabs

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Popover API: menus and tooltips without JavaScript

The code for an account menu, a tooltip that opens on click and a notice that only its own button closes, the CSS animation, and a cheat sheet with every Popover API attribute, method and event. With a checklist.

FOR	Stores and sites built in HTML, Liquid, React or any framework that outputs HTML
TESTED WITH	Playwright 1.62 · Chromium 151, Firefox 155 and WebKit 26.5 · November 19, 2026
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DOCS	developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/API/Popover_API
ARTICLE	ecomlabs.dev/g/popover-en
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BEFORE YOU START

Support and testing

The basic popover has been Baseline since January 27, 2025 (Chrome and Edge 114, Firefox 125, Safari 17, iOS 18.3). Every snippet in this guide ran in Chromium 151, Firefox 155 and WebKit 26.5.

STEP 01

The account menu

```
<button type="button" popovertarget="menu">My account</button>
<nav id="menu" popover aria-label="My account">
  <ul>
    <li><a href="/account/orders">Orders</a></li>
    <li><a href="/account/addresses">Addresses</a></li>
    <li><a href="/account/logout">Log out</a></li>
  </ul>
</nav>
```

To place it under the button instead of centered in the viewport, use anchor positioning. `popovertarget` already makes the button the implicit anchor, so `position-area` is all you need:

```
/* The menu sits under its button (anchor positioning). */
#menu {
  position-area: bottom span-right;
  margin: 0.25rem 0 0;
}
```

`bottom span-right` lines it up with the button's left edge; the margin removes the default `margin: auto` and leaves a 4px gap. Without `position-area` support, the menu shows up centered: it still works.

STEP 02

The click tooltip

```
<p>Express shipping
  <button type="button" popovertarget="shipping-help" aria-label="What is express shipping?">?</button>
</p>
<p id="shipping-help" popover>Arrives in one business day within the city.</p>
```

- The button only shows `?`: the `aria-label` is required so it has a name.
- It is `auto`: an outside click or Escape closes it, and opening it closes the menu.
- It opens on click or tap, not on hover. `popover="hint"` is designed for tooltips, but stable Safari doesn't have it yet and treats it as `manual`.

STEP 03

The notice that stays put

```
<button type="button" popovertarget="notice" popovertargetaction="show">Show shipping notice</button>
<div id="notice" popover="manual">
  <p>Orders placed today ship on Monday.</p>
  <button type="button" popovertarget="notice" popovertargetaction="hide">Close notice</button>
</div>
```

`manual` ignores outside clicks and Escape, and opening a menu doesn't close it. The first button only opens (`show`); the one inside only closes (`hide`). Showing it on page load takes one line of JavaScript:

```
document.getElementById("notice").showPopover();
```

Showing a popover doesn't move focus. If screen reader users must hear the notice, also put its text in a live region (`role="status"`) that is already on the page.

STEP 04

The animation

```
/* Fade in and out. overlay keeps it in the top layer while it closes. */
[popover] {
  opacity: 0;
  translate: 0 -0.5rem;
  transition:
    opacity 0.15s,
    translate 0.15s,
    overlay 0.15s allow-discrete,
    display 0.15s allow-discrete;
}
[popover]:popover-open {
  opacity: 1;
  translate: 0 0;
}
@starting-style {
  [popover]:popover-open {
    opacity: 0;
    translate: 0 -0.5rem;
  }
}

/* No movement for people who asked for less of it. */
@media (prefers-reduced-motion: reduce) {
  [popover] {
    transition: none;
```

```
  }
}
```

> **CAUTION**
>
> Order matters: `@starting-style` goes after `:popover-open`. The entry animated in all three engines; the exit only in Chromium, because `overlay` only exists in Chrome and Edge. In Firefox and Safari the popover closes at once, with no errors.

CHEAT SHEET

Attributes, methods and events

PIECE	VALUES OR USE	WHAT IT DOES
`popover`	`auto` (or empty)	Closes on outside click and Escape; one open at a time
`popover`	`hint`	For tooltips; doesn't close `auto`. Unsupported, it acts as `manual`
`popover`	`manual`	Only you close it; several at once
`popovertarget`	the `id`	On `<button>` or button `<input>`: controls the popover
`popovertargetaction`	`toggle`, `show`, `hide`	What the button does; `toggle` by default
`commandfor` + `command`	`toggle-popover`, `show-popover`, `hide-popover`	The same with Invoker Commands (Baseline since December 2025)
`showPopover()`, `hidePopover()`, `togglePopover()`	JavaScript	Open, close or toggle from code
`beforetoggle`	event	Before the change; `preventDefault()` stops an opening
`toggle`	event	After the change; carries `oldState` and `newState`
`:popover-open`	CSS	Styles the open state
`::backdrop`	CSS	Full-screen layer behind the popover
`position-area`	CSS	Places it next to its button (implicit anchor)

WHEN YOU'RE DONE

Checklist

- [ ] Every control is a `<button type="button">` with the right `id` in `popovertarget`.

- [ ] Menus and tooltips are `auto`; notices are `manual` with a close button.
- [ ] The `?` button has an `aria-label`.
- [ ] The menu sits under its button with `position-area` and still looks fine centered.
- [ ] No stray `z-index` or `role="menu"` left.
- [ ] The animation respects `prefers-reduced-motion` and the instant close looks fine.
- [ ] Keyboard: Enter opens, Tab goes into the popover, Escape closes and returns to the button.
- [ ] Anything that must block the page uses `<dialog>` with `showModal()`, not a popover.