



Keyboard Shortcuts in Windows 95/98/NT

This sheet contains keyboard alternatives for Windows 95, 98 and NT. If you are using Windows 3.1 or 3.11 ask us for the factsheet entitled "Keyboards: an Alternative to the Mouse".

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Section 1 - Introduction

1.1 Introduction to our keyboard

When we first get a computer with a graphical user interface (GUI), like Windows, our computer acquires a mouse. We become used to moving the pointer and clicking on what we want. When we get competent with our mouse, we rarely think of using the computer in any other way. After all that's what the mouse is for, isn't it? But it's not the only way to get what we want from our computer. It's often not the easiest way either! For some people the mouse can be frustrating, uncomfortable, even painful, and for others a visual impairment may mean that use of the mouse isn't an option. The keyboard is not just the standard input device, it is a powerful and effective tool that can replace the mouse completely.

An instance of when using the keyboard is easier and more efficient than using the mouse might be, for example, when you want to get to some of the controls situated on your Desktop (see section 3.1) and hence need to clear away from cluttering the screen all running programs that are open. This would take many mouse movements and clicks to clear from the screen each program one by one. But by simply pressing the Windows Logo key (situated between the left Ctrl and Alt keys)+M clears away all running programs in one fell swoop.

A note of caution: Whereas it is possible to do everything in Windows itself from the keyboard, some programs that you might have on your computer may not altogether adhere to the guidelines set out for keyboard alternative conventions. You will find, however, that your Windows programs will feel reassuringly similar when being controlled from the keyboard.

1.2 Keyboarding Difficulties

If you experience any difficulties in using the keyboard, either because you hold your finger down too long on a key and get a string of characters on the screen, because you brush other keys by mistake, because your hands shake or because you can only press one key at a time, there are ways of tuning your keyboard to tailor its response to your particular requirements.

For an explanation of these functions contact us and ask for the factsheet entitled "Windows 95 Accessibility Options".

If you think a different keyboard might help ask us for the "Dealing With Keyboarding and Mouse Difficulties" factsheet.

Now let's see how easy it is to operate Windows using the keyboard by following the examples below.

Section 2 - Examples to Follow

Before we start outlining the keystrokes available to you in Windows, why not follow these examples which will give you an idea of what it is all about?

2.1 Example 1: Open Notepad, create and save a document.

Let's write a small document in Notepad and then save it under a filename.

Pull up the Start Menu by pressing the Windows logo key (between the left Ctrl and Alt keys or to the right of the right Alt key).

Now hit P to select the "Programs" option. This drops down a sub-menu of all your programs.

Now hit A until "Accessories" is highlighted. If the sub-menu for "Accessories" has not already dropped down then hit Enter or Right Arrow to open it.

Now Hit N. If Notepad is the only program in your Accessories beginning with this letter then Notepad will now open, otherwise keep pressing N until Notepad is highlighted and press Enter.

Now type the following text into Notepad as follows:

Exercise One

No danger of becoming a "mouse-potato" when you learn how to operate Windows the easy way - from the keyboard!

Now hold down the left Alt key and press F to pull down the File menu.

Press S to select the "Save" option and the "Save As" dialog pops up.

Now type in the filename "exercise one" (without the quotes) and press Enter.

You have now written and saved a document.

2.2 Example 2: Open WordPad and paste some text from Notepad

Leaving Notepad open, repeat the process used to open Notepad by pulling up the Start menu and selecting "Accessories", but press W instead of N to select and open WordPad.

Now switch to Notepad by holding down the alt key and pressing Tab once.

Now highlight all the text in Notepad. This is done by pulling

down the Edit menu with Alt and E, then press A to choose "Select All".

Copy this text to the Windows Clipboard by holding down Ctrl and pressing C.

Switch back to WordPad with Alt Tab.

Paste the text into WordPad with Ctrl+V.

2.3 Example 3: Format the text, print it out and save

Now we will change the appearance of some of the text.

Press Ctrl+Home to get to the top of the document.

Press Shift+End to highlight the title "Exercise One" and then Ctrl+B to make it bold and Ctrl+E to centre it.

Now arrow down twice to the first line of text and use Ctrl+Left or Right Arrow to jump words at a time until you land on the "m" of "mouse"

Now press the Right arrow three times whilst holding down the Ctrl key to select the phrase in quotes.

Press Ctrl+I to italicise the text.

Now print the document with Ctrl+P and Enter.

Then save it with Ctrl+S, followed by giving it a filename and pressing Enter.

Section 3 - Windows Keyboard Commands

3.1 Navigation without a mouse

Introduction to the Desktop

Depending on your setup preferences several items will appear on the screen when you enter Windows. There will be, by default, the Taskbar located at the bottom of your screen and is always visible when Windows is running. Every time you start a program or open a window, a picture representing that program appears on the Taskbar. When you close a program, its picture disappears from the Taskbar. The Taskbar also includes the Start Button, on the left end, and the time, shown at the rightmost end. The rest of the screen contains a number of icons (pictures with a text label beneath) with different functions, such as "My Computer", "Recycle Bin" etc. For example the 'My Computer' icon will take you to a window that lists all your drives, folders **and files**.

These icons are sitting on a background that may be plain or a picture. This area is called your "Desktop" and it is possible to move the highlight, or focus, from the Start button to the Taskbar to the icons on the Desktop with the Tab key. Give it a go.

When one of the icons on your Desktop is highlighted you can move between them using the Arrow keys, or by typing the first letter of their names. Select the item by pressing Enter.

Similarly, when the focus is on an item on the Taskbar, you can use the Left and Right Arrow to move between them and press Enter to go to that running program. But how can we run a program without using the mouse?

Opening Programs

You can get to most programs you have on your computer by simply pressing the Windows Logo key (situated between the left Ctrl and Alt keys and to the right of the right Alt key). This pulls up the Start Menu which has several items that perform a range of useful functions.

In the Start Menu, like in all other 'pull-down' menus, the Up and Down Arrow keys will move up or down through the items, and the Right Arrow will open any sub-menus.

Also, hitting the first letter of an item will take the highlight to that item, so hitting P will open the Programs submenu. Move through the programs you have in your Programs submenu using the arrow keys or by pressing the first letter and open a program by hitting Enter.

Most used programs

Programs that are in the StartUp' submenu will be started automatically when you start Windows. Use this to open programs you use often. This could save you mouse movements and keystrokes. (To add a program into StartUp see "Working with files and folders - Copying files and folders" in the Help item of the Start menu).

Moving between open programs quickly

Hold the Alt key down and press the Tab key (Above the Caps Lock on the left). A box appears in the middle of the screen displaying the program that is next available to you. As you keep pressing the Tab key you will cycle through the open programs. When you see the program you want, release the keys. You have now transferred to that program, without minimising the initial one. Pressing Alt Tab once will take you back to the previous program.

Dialog Boxes in Windows - general principles

You are often presented with different boxes (called Dialog Boxes) on screen (such as; save as, print, format document etc.). Getting around these boxes is a little different from the rest of Windows. In some boxes you can pick a button or go to an option by pressing the letter that is underlined in its name. Some you need to use the Alt key with the letter. However, some general rules do apply.

- Use Tab and Shift+Tab to move forwards and backwards through the controls
- When on a button you can press Space to activate it
- If the control looks like a slider use the Left and Right Arrows or PgUp and PgDn to change the value
- In a group of options with circles beside them, one of which is filled in, use the arrow keys to change the selected option
- A control that comprises a list of items, one of which is highlighted, can be moved through using the arrow keys

- If a control comprises an option in a box with a downward pointing arrow symbol to the right a drop down list can be opened with Alt+Down Arrow
- An item with an empty box to the left can be checked or unchecked with the Space Bar

Cardfile-type tabs along the top of the Dialog Box represents multiple pages of options. Pressing Ctrl+Tab changes which page of options is visible.

3.2. Using Functions and Menus

Menus and menu options

Most menus will have a single word name. The name contains a letter that is underlined (e.g. File). By pressing the Alt key (Left of the Space Bar), you will activate the menu bar (the box with the small dash at the top left hand corner of the screen becomes highlighted). Then by typing the letter that is underlined (F for File), you will call up that menu. You can also combine the Alt and the letter in one keystroke. This is exactly the same as if you had clicked on the menu with the mouse. Press the letter that is underlined in the option you wish to use from that menu, without the Alt key, (e.g. S for Save), and that too is selected without the use of the mouse.

OR: After selecting the Menu (using Alt+F for file, for example) you can use the arrow keys to move down the list of options using enter to select. By using the arrow keys left and right, you can move across to the next menu along.

Getting into control menus

We have had a look at using the Alt key to select a named menu, but there are menus that don't have a name (the control menus in the top left corners). Alt+Space Bar will select the main control menu. From here you can close the program, or minimise/maximise it.

OR:

Sometimes two control menus are live - such as when you are writing a document in a word processor. One (the program) will have a long dash in the box, the other (the document) a short dash. Alt+- (minus sign) will give the same for the secondary windows as Alt+Space does for the main windows.

Hot Keys

With some Windows software we can use Hot-Keys (including Windows itself). These are combinations of keys (like Ctrl+P), that will perform a function (like print), automatically. Hot-Keys are activated straight from the document itself. You don't have to access a single menu! By looking inside the menu you use to save your work, you may find that a combination of keys is printed to the right of that option (e.g. Save Ctrl+S). Instead of moving the mouse and clicking, or using the Alt key to go through the menus, we can save our work automatically by keying Ctrl+S. Your work is saved in exactly the same way as before. Other regularly used functions can be achieved in a similar way. Often used hot keys are; Ctrl+P for Print, Ctrl+O for Open, Ctrl+N

for new. Other hot keys specific to your programs can be found by using the help menus (try F1).

Function Keys

At the top of keyboards you will find the Function Keys (F1 to F12). In most major software you will find that certain function keys can be used to do some of the more common tasks in one keystroke (like spell checking). In Microsoft Word for example, you press F7 to perform a spell check. Once inside the Spell Check program, you will notice that again certain letters are underlined (on the buttons). By using the Alt key with these letters we can perform the whole spell check procedure from the keyboard.

OR: Another popular hot key is F1 - for Help. Almost all Windows programs come with some sort of help file that can be triggered by using the F1 key. If you are having trouble with a program, press F1 and look around with the arrow and Tab keys, hitting Enter to select an item.

3.3 Text manipulation

Highlighting

To perform the same function as clicking and dragging on a mouse, hold the shift key down and use the arrow keys. Quicker methods on the same vain are; Ctrl+Shift and Left/Right Arrow to highlight a word at a time, Ctrl+Shift and Up/Down Arrow to highlight to the beginning/end of the paragraph (from the cursor point). Some programs use a Hot-Key like Ctrl+A to highlight all of the text in a document with one keystroke. By using the PgUp, PgDn, Home and End keys to get around, you can quickly highlight the areas you need without the use of the mouse.

Cut, copy and paste

You can cut copy and paste information using the keyboard shortcuts. You can either use them via the Edit menu or, in most Windows programs you can use; Ctrl+X for cut, Ctrl+C for copy and Ctrl+V for paste. Notice that these keys are together, for quick use while working. A good way to remember this is to think of Ctrl+C(opy), with cut and paste being either side.

OR: Another method that works in all Windows programs is; Ctrl+Ins to insert data into the clipboard, Shift+Ins to paste. This method also works for certain graphical image manipulation such as when using Paintbrush.

Bold, italic and underline - and delete text

By using the menu system via the keyboard you can format the type of font you wish to use and any enhancements along with it. Access the Format menu in your program and choose the font option. By Tabbing to the choice you wish to change and typing the new value, you can accomplish anything available on a toolbar.

Some key saving shortcuts that are supported by most large programs are; Ctrl+I for italic, Ctrl+B for bold, Ctrl+U for underline. (This will only work with programs that support this level of character enhancement.) These key combinations can be used as you type, pressing them before and after you type the text to be enhanced, or they can be used to enhance an area of text you highlighted as above.

You do not have to delete letter by letter or use the cut option if you want to delete areas of text. Highlight, then press the delete key (or backspace). If you wish to delete a few words or just the last word try Ctrl+Delete/Backspace. This will delete text word by word instead of letter by letter.

3.4 More Keyboard Commands

So far we have outlined some of the keystrokes that enable us to operate our computer from the keyboard. Let's start listing in more detail these keystrokes, and some other keyboard alternatives.

What Can the Windows Key Do?

As mentioned in the introduction the addition of the Windows Logo Key to the Windows 95 keyboard (also used in 98 and NT) has given us some useful new keyboard functionality. Here is a list of the most useful keyboard commands:

Key	Function
Windows Logo key or Ctrl+Escape key	Opens the Start Menu located on the Task Bar
Windows Logo key+M	Minimises all open applications, taking focus to the Desktop
Shift+Logo key+M	Restores all open applications
Windows Logo key+E	Opens the Windows Explorer (also found in Start Menu/Programs)
Windows Logo key+F	Opens the 'Find All Files' Dialog Box (also in Start Menu)
Ctrl+Logo key+F	Open the 'Find Computer' Dialog Box
Windows Logo key+R	Opens the 'Run' Dialog Box (also in Start Menu)

Windows Explorer Keys

The Windows Explorer displays and can manipulate the contents of your disk drives, folders (directories) and files. It can be accessed at any time with the Windows Logo key+E, or from the Start Menu 'Programs' item.

Usually Windows Explorer displays two panes, the left containing a 'tree-view' of the folders on your computer, and the right containing the files contained in the currently selected folder.

The directory structure comprises folders branching out from the topmost folder, which is 'Desktop' and contains those items visible on your Desktop, and can be used as an alternative way of accessing those items. A folder has a 'parent' folder (apart from 'Desktop') and may also have several child folders.

Here is a list of the keyboard shortcuts for Windows Explorer (many of these functions can also be activated from within the pull-down menus)

Key	Function
Up and Down Arrow keys	Moves up and down through items
Any letter key	Cycles through items beginning with that letter
Home	Goes to the topmost folder or file
End	Goes to the bottom-most folder or file
Enter	To open a folder or select a file
Backspace	To open the parent folder
Ctrl+G	Opens 'Goto Folder' dialog
Ctrl+F or F3	Opens 'Find All Files' dialog
Delete	Deletes the highlighted items keeping a copy in the Recycle Bin
Shift+Delete	Deletes highlighted items without keeping a copy
Alt+Enter key	Displays the properties of the selected item
F2	To rename the highlighted item
F4	Opens the pull-down list box from the Toolbar
F5	Refreshes the contents of the current window
F6 or Tab key	Cycles between the left pane, right pane, and the Toolbar

(in tree-view (left pane) only)

Right Arrow	Opens any child folders and highlights the first
Left Arrow	Closes child folders or highlights the parent folder
Numpad *	Expands everything under the current folder
Numpad -	Closes everything under the current folder
Numpad +	Expands everything below the current folder

To copy or move the highlighted files or folders use the Copy or Cut keyboard shortcuts (Ctrl+C, Ctrl+X), then Paste (Ctrl+V) them elsewhere.

Hot-keying your favourite programs

Creating hot-keys is an easy and quick way of opening, or switching to those already open, programs and documents you use most often. You can put a Shortcut as an icon on your Desktop or as an item on your Start Menu, and as a Keyboard Shortcut comprising a combination of the Ctrl, Alt, Shift and any of the letter or number keys. To assign a Keyboard Shortcut, there must also be either an icon on the desktop or an item on the Start Menu.

To create a Shortcut and place it on your Start Menu:

- Open the Windows Explorer with Windows Logo key + E or by selecting it from the "Windows Explorer" option in the "Programs" sub-menu found in the Start Menu.
- Open the folder in which the desired program or document is situated.
- Highlight the desired program or document.
- Open the File Menu with Alt + F, and press the letter S to create a Shortcut for the highlighted item. An extra item "Shortcut to ..." will appear in the right pane.
- Highlight this new Shortcut item in the right pane
- If you would like to rename this item before placing it on the Start Menu then press Alt + F to pull down the File Menu, and then the letter M for "Rename". Now type the new name and press the Enter key.
- Use the Copy command (Ctrl + C) to copy the highlighted item to the clipboard.
- Press Alt + F4 to close Windows Explorer.
- Open the Start Menu with Ctrl + Escape key, or the Windows Logo key.
- Press the Escape key to close the Start Menu and leave the focus on the Start Button.
- Press Shift + F10 to open the Shortcut Menu for the Start Button.
- Press the letter E to select the "Explore" item which opens another copy of Windows Explorer with the contents of the Start Menu in the right pane.
- Use the Paste command (Ctrl + V) to paste the new Shortcut to the end of the list of Start Menu items.
- Press Alt + F4 to close Windows Explorer.

To assign a Shortcut key to the Shortcut:

- Highlight the Shortcut on the Desktop or, if in the Start Menu, the equivalent item in Windows Explorer.
- Press Alt + Enter key to open the Properties dialog.
- Press Ctrl + Tab key to display the Shortcut page.
- Press Alt + K or Tab key to move to the Shortcut key edit box.
- Press and release your desired key combination including any of the Ctrl, Alt and Shift keys. Press Backspace if incorrectly entered.
- Tab once.
- Press the Enter key to select the "OK" button.

Section 4 - Conclusions

4.1 Things we can't do with a keyboard

We have seen how the mouse can be replaced in a lot of areas by simple keystrokes. But remember the mouse is a powerful tool in its own right, and if used with the keyboard they complement each other. Some things for some users are quicker done with a mouse. Try drawing a curved line with a keyboard! All modern programs allow the user to drag information from one place to another with the mouse. There is no keyboard alternative for this feature - to date.

The keyboard can be used on its own for 95% of the time you use a computer. The other 5% if necessary (most users would not be doing drawing for example), can be accessed via the keyboard given the right adaptive software. If you cannot use, or do not want to use a mouse, you can still use a computer with Windows, via the keyboard, to do all your work. A keyboard can be tuned to suit the user that it serves.

4.2 Summary and moving on

Although the majority of Windows software will have some keyboard short cuts, not all are standard. The best approach is to look at the screen and try out a few things. If we know that an underlined letter on a menu bar means that we can go straight to that menu by using the Alt key with that letter, look around for where they are. When you get into a menu, take a look at the options in front of you and see if they suggest a keyboard short cut. Press F1 and see if it mentions short cuts in the help file.

The next step is creating your own shortcuts. Most word processors enable you to use abbreviations. By using a few letters you can produce repeated sentences quickly and easily. An example: I use "ys" to produce "yours sincerely", with four blank lines and then my name for the end of my letters. Another area you can look at is Macros. Check your help file or manual to see how to use them. You can't break a computer by trying basic things in a word processor, so think about what you want to do and try things out!

One experienced user who tried said, after a day or two, "It's amazing how quickly you will learn to use Windows without a mouse, if you just put the mouse away!" Why not try it?

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