50+ keyboard shortcuts to move faster in Windows XP

By Jason Hiner, MCSE, CCNA

Special thanks to TechRepublic members who responded to the first version of this document with suggestions for additional keyboard shortcuts that should be added. They have helped us double the number of keyboard shortcuts on the new version of this document.

Author's Note: The Windows key (⊞) is normally located between the Ctrl and Alt keys on most keyboards. However, some vendor keyboards and some laptops do not have this key.

Keystroke	Function
⊞	Opens the Start menu
⊞ + E	Opens My Computer in Windows Explorer
⊞ + Pause/Break	Opens the System Properties dialog box
⊞ + U	Opens the Utility Manager
⊞ + R	Opens the Run… prompt
⊞ + F	Opens the Search for Files and Folder window
⊞ + Ctrl + F	Opens the search for computers on the network
⊞ + M	Minimize all windows
⊞ + Shift + + M	Maximize all windows (after minimizing them)
⊞ + D	Minimize all windows to the desktop, and then restore all Windows
⊞ + L	Lock Computer
⊞ + Tab	Cycle through the open programs on the Taskbar
⊞ + B	Selects the first item in the System Tray; use the arrow keys to cycle through the items and use the Enter key to open a selected item in the SysTray
Alt + Tab	Switch between open programs
Alt + F4 (in a program)	Closes the program
Alt + F4 (from desktop)	Opens the Windows Shutdown/Restart dialog box
Alt + Enter	Opens the Properties page of a selected item
Alt + Esc	Cycle between open programs in the order that they were opened
Alt + Spacebar	In the active window, this brings up the corner dialog box for Move, Size, Minimize, Maximize, or Close
Shift + Insert CD/DVD	Inserts a CD/DVD without triggering Autoplay or Autorun
Shift + Delete	Permanently deletes an item (rather than sending it to the Recycle Bin)
Ctrl + Shift + Esc	Opens the Windows Task Manager
Ctrl + drag an icon	Copies that item
Ctrl + Shift + drag an icon	Creates a shortcut for the item

Keystroke	Function
Right-click + drag a file	Brings up a menu to copy, move, or create a shortcut
PrtScn	Takes a screen shot of the entire screen; go into a photo program (the Windows program "Paint" will also work) and hit Paste to edit and save the screen shot
Alt + PrtScn	Takes a screen shot of only the active Window; hit Paste in a photo program to edit and save the screen shot
F1	Opens the Windows XP Help
F2	Rename selected item
F3	Opens Windows search for files and folders
F5 (or Ctrl + R)	Refresh Internet Explorer page, or refresh any other window
F6	Cycle through the different types of elements that can be selection on a screen or window
F10	Selects the menu bar in the active program (usually "File") so that you can use the arrow keys to navigate through the menus and the Enter key to select
Shift + F10	For a selected item, this does the same thing as a right-click with the mouse
Tab	Move through the different elements on a page or the fields in a form
Shift + Tab	Move backward through the different elements on a page or the fields in a form
Ctrl + A	Select All
Ctrl + C	Copy
Ctrl + X	Cut
Ctrl + V	Paste
Ctrl + Z	Undo
Ctrl + Y	Redo
Ctrl + P	Print
Ctrl + O	Open
Ctrl + Esc	Opens the Start menu
Ctrl + Backspace	Deletes the entire word to the left
Ctrl + Delete	Deletes the entire word to the right
Ctrl + Right arrow	Moves the cursor to the beginning of the next word
Ctrl + Left arrow	Moves the cursor to the beginning of the previous word
Ctrl + Down arrow	Moves the cursor to the beginning of the next paragraph
Ctrl + Up arrow	Moves the cursor to the beginning of the previous paragraph
Ctrl + Shift + Arrow keys	Highlight a block of text
Click Shift 5 times	Turns StickyKeys on or off
Hold down the right Shift key for 8 seconds	Turns FilterKeys on or off

Keystroke	Function
Hold down Num Lock for 5 seconds	Turns ToggleKeys on or off
Make your own custom keystroke for a program	Right-click on the icon of a program or shortcut; go to Properties; click on the Shortcut tab; enter your custom keystroke combination in the "Shortcut key" field (it will only let you assign key combos that aren't already taken)

[Jason Hiner](#) is a Content Manager for CNET Networks where he manages a team of editors that work on TechRepublic.com. Previously, he worked as an Information Systems Manager in the health care industry. He has experience in Windows administration, Linux/UNIX administration, Microsoft Exchange administration, and Web site development. His certifications include MCSE, CCNA, Network+, and i-Net+. He is a two-time winner of the Microsoft's Most Valuable Professional (MVP) award.

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