General Windows keyboard shortcuts

Alt+Tab

Switch between open applications in all versions of Windows.
Reverse the direction by pressing **Alt+Shift+Tab** at the same
time.

Ctrl+Tab

Switches between program groups, tabs, or document windows in
applications that support this feature. Reverse the direction by
pressing **Ctrl+Shift+Tab** at the same time.

Alt+double-click

In Windows 95 or later, display the properties of the object
you double-click. For example, doing this on a file would display
its properties.

Alt+Print Screen

Create a screenshot only for the active program window in all versions of Windows. For example, if you opened the calculator and pressed these shortcut keys, only the calculator window would be created as a screenshot. If the **Print Screen key** is pressed alone, the whole screen will be made into a screenshot.

Ctrl+Alt+Del

Open the Windows option screen for locking computer, switching user, Task Manager, etc. in later versions of Windows. Pressing Ctrl+Alt+Del multiple times reboots the computer.

Ctrl+Shift+Esc

Immediately bring up the Windows Task Manager in Windows 2000 and later.

Ctrl+Esc

Open the Windows Start menu in most versions of Windows. In Windows 8, this opens the Start screen and in Windows 3.x, this opens the Task Manager.

Alt+Esc

Switch between open applications on Taskbar in Windows 95 and later.

Alt+Spacebar

Drops down the window control menu for the currently open Windows program in Windows 95 and later.

Alt+Enter

Opens properties window of selected icon or program in Windows 95 and later.

Shift+Del

Permanently delete any file or another object without throwing it into the Recycle Bin in Windows 95 and later.

Hold down the Shift key

When putting in an audio or data CD that uses Autoplay, holding down the Shift key prevents that CD from playing.

Windows function key shortcuts

Below is a listing of keyboard shortcuts that use the keyboard function keys. See our what are F1 through F12 keys page for a full listing of what function keys do with all other programs.

F1

Activates help for current open application. If you're at the Windows desktop, this activates the help for Windows.

F2

Renames a highlighted icon, file, or folder in all versions of Windows.

F3

Starts find or search when at the Windows desktop in all versions of Windows.

F4

In Windows 95 and later, F4 opens the drive selection or address bar when browsing files in Windows Explorer.

F6

While in Windows Explorer, F6 moves the cursor to different Windows Explorer pane or in Windows 7 browse available drives.

F8

Pressing F8 over and over as the computer is booting starts the computer in Safe Mode.

F10

Activates the file menu bar in all versions of Windows.

Windows keyboard key shortcuts

Below is a listing of Windows keys that can be used on computers running Microsoft Windows 95 or later and using a keyboard with a Windows key. In the below list of shortcuts, the Windows key is represented by "WINKEY." Because not all these shortcuts work in every version of Windows, we've mentioned which versions of Windows support each shortcut key combination.

All versions of Windows

WINKEY

Pressing the Windows key alone opens or hides the Windows Start menu. In Windows 8, this opens or hides the Start screen.

WINKEY+F1

Open the Microsoft Windows help and support center.

WINKEY+Pause / Break key

Open the System Properties window.

WINKEY+D

Display and hide the Windows desktop.

WINKEY+E

Open Microsoft Windows Explorer.

WINKEY+F

Display the Windows Search or Find feature.

WINKEY+Ctrl+F

Display the search for computers window.

WINKEY+L

Lock the computer and switch users if needed (Windows XP and above only).

WINKEY+M

Minimizes all windows.

WINKEY+Shift+M

Undo the minimize done by WINKEY+M and WINKEY+D.

WINKEY+R

Open the run window.

WINKEY+U

Open Utility Manager or the Ease of Access Center.

Windows XP

WINKEY+Tab

Cycle through open programs on the Taskbar.

Windows 7 and 8

WINKEY+1-0

Pressing the Windows key and any top row number key from 1 to 0 opens the program corresponding to the number of the program icon on the Taskbar. For example, if the first icon on the Taskbar is Internet Explorer, pressing WINKEY+1 would open that program or switch to it if already open.

WINKEY+(Plus (+) or Minus (-))

Open Windows Magnifier and zoom in with the plus symbol (+) and zoom out with the minus symbol (-).

WINKEY+Home

Minimize all windows except the active window.

WINKEY+P

Change between the monitor and projection display types or how second screen displays computer screen.

WINKEY+T

Set the focus on the Taskbar icons.

WINKEY+Left arrow

Shrinks the window to 1/2 screen on the left side for side by side viewing.

WINKEY+Right arrow

Shrinks the window to 1/2 screen on the right side for side by side viewing.

WINKEY+Up arrow

When in the side by side viewing mode, this shortcut takes the screen back to full size.

WINKEY+Down arrow

Minimizes the screen. Also, when in the side by side viewing mode, this shortcut takes the screen back to a minimized size.

Windows 8

WINKEY+,

Peek at the Windows desktop.

WINKEY+.

Snap a Windows App to the sides of the screen. Pressing it multiple times will switch between the right and left side of the screen or unsnap the app.

WINKEY+Enter

Open Windows Narrator.

WINKEY+C

Open the Charms.

WINKEY+G

Cycle through desktop gadgets.

WINKEY+H

Open *Share* in Charms.

WINKEY+I

Open the *Settings* in Charms.

WINKEY+J

Switch between snapped apps.

WINKEY+K

Open Devices in Charms.

WINKEY+O

Lock the screen orientation.

WINKEY+X

Open the Power User Menu, which gives you access to many of the features most power users would want to use such as Device Manager, Control Panel, Event Viewer, Command Prompt, and much more.

Windows 10

WINKEY+,

Peek at the Windows desktop.

WINKEY+A

Open the Windows 10 Action Center.

WINKEY+G

Open the Game bar. Only works if a game is running.

WINKEY+I

Open the Windows 10 *Settings* window.

WINKEY+S

Open the Windows Search utility.

WINKEY+X

Open the Power User Menu, which gives you access to many of the features most power users would want to use such as Device Manager, Control Panel, Event Viewer, Command Prompt, and much more.