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Windows 10 cheat sheet: Handy gestures and shortcuts

Learn these useful touchpad gestures, keyboard shortcuts and touchscreen gestures for getting around Windows 10.

By Preston Gralla | Winter 2018

Windows 10 supports a variety of keyboard shortcuts as well as gestures for touch-based devices. Try them out a few times, and before long they'll become second nature.

First, let's look at touchpad gestures. Touchpads are standard equipment on laptops these days, and for everyday computing a modern touchpad can do everything a mouse can, and more. (Note, however, that if you have an older machine, some or all of these gestures might not work.)

Windows 10 touchpad gestures	
GESTURE	**WHAT IT DOES**
Tap the touchpad with one finger	Open or select an item
Tap the touchpad with two fingers	Show more commands (like right-clicking)
Tap the touchpad with three fingers	Open Cortana
Tap the touchpad with four fingers	Open the Action Center
Place two fingers on the touchpad and slide vertically or horizontally	Scroll
Place two fingers on the touchpad and pinch	Zoom out
Place two fingers on the touchpad and spread them apart	Zoom in
Swipe three fingers up	Show thumbnails of your currently running apps in Task View
Swipe three fingers down	Show the desktop
Swipe three fingers either left or right	Switch between your open apps
Swipe four fingers either left or right	Switch between virtual desktops

Next up are the most useful keyboard shortcuts — get to know these and you'll save oodles of time as you zip around Windows 10 without taking your hands off the keys.

Windows 10 keyboard shortcuts	
KEY COMBINATION	**WHAT IT DOES**
Windows key	Show/hide the Start menu (toggle)
Windows-A	Show/hide the Action Center (toggle)
Windows-C	Open Cortana in listening mode
Windows-D	Show the desktop or go to your previous location
Windows-E	Open File Explorer
Windows-H	Take a screenshot of your current app and share it
Windows-I	Open the Settings app
Windows-K	Connect to a wireless display or audio device
Windows-L	Lock the device or switch accounts
Windows-M	Minimize all windows
Windows-O	Lock the screen orientation
Windows-R	Open the Run box
Windows-S	Open the Search box or Cortana
Windows-T	Put the focus on the taskbar and cycle through your running desktop apps
Windows-X	Open a menu of tools for power users
Windows-Tab	Open Task View
Windows-Pause*	Display System Properties screen
Windows-1 through 9	Go to the app in the corresponding position on the taskbar
Windows-, (comma)	Peek at the desktop (requires holding the Windows key down)
Windows-Home	Minimize/restore non-active desktop apps (toggle)
Windows-up arrow	Maximize a desktop app (or restore it if it's minimized)
Windows-down arrow	Minimize a desktop app (or restore it if it's maximized)
Windows-F1	Get Windows help
Windows-Ctrl-D	Add a virtual desktop
Windows-Ctrl-4	Close the virtual desktop you're working in
Alt-Tab	Cycle through thumbnails of open apps
Alt-F4	Exit the current Windows app or desktop application
Ctrl-A	Select all
Ctrl-C	Copy
Ctrl-E	Select the address bar in the Edge browser
Ctrl-N	Open a new window in Edge
Ctrl-R	Refresh
Ctrl-V	Paste
Ctrl-X	Cut
Ctrl-W	Close the current window in Edge
Ctrl-Y	Redo
Ctrl-Z	Undo
Ctrl-F4	Close the active document in desktop apps
Ctrl-mouse click	Select multiple items in File Explorer
Ctrl-Shift	Select a group of contiguous items in File Explorer
Ctrl-Shift-Esc	Run the Task Manager
Ctrl-Shift-N	Create a new folder in File Explorer
PrtScrn	Take a screenshot and place it on the Clipboard
F3	Search for a file or folder in File Explorer

* The Pause key is located to the upper right of most keyboards; however, some portable and laptop keyboards don't have a Pause key.

Finally, if you're working on a tablet or a touchscreen PC, here's how to get around.

Windows 10 touchscreen gestures	
GESTURE	WHAT IT DOES
Tap	Open or select an item
Tap the Windows button	Switch between the Start screen and the currently running app
Press and hold	Pop up a menu to display more information about the item
Press and hold, slide and release	Move an item to a new location (the equivalent of dragging an item with a mouse)
Pinch with two fingers	Zoom out (used in apps such as Maps where you commonly zoom in and out)
Spread two fingers apart	Zoom in (used in apps such as Maps where you commonly zoom in and out)
Rotate with two fingers	Rotate the display in the direction you move your fingers
Swipe horizontally	Scroll sideways through a screen
Swipe vertically	Scroll up or down
On the lock screen, swipe up from the bottom edge of the screen	Display the login screen
Swipe in from the left edge of the screen to the center	Show thumbnails of your currently running apps in Task View
Swipe in from the right edge of the screen to the center	Display the Action Center
Pull down from the top of the screen to the bottom	Close an app
Swipe down from the top of an app	Bring up the app's title bar
Slowly pull down from the top of an app	Snap the app to take up one half of the screen

Preston Gralla is a contributing editor for Computerworld and the author of more than 45 books, including Windows 8 Hacks (O'Reilly, 2012) and How the Internet Works (Que, 2006).