

How to Disable or Reassign The Caps Lock Key on Any Operating System



For most people, Caps Lock is only an obstacle to avoid while typing. Having Caps Lock do nothing at all would be an improvement. You don't have to pry Caps Lock off your keyboard — you can disable it.

You can also remap Caps Lock to use that prime keyboard real estate for something useful. Here are instructions for doing this on Windows, Linux, Mac OS X, Chrome OS, iOS, and Android.



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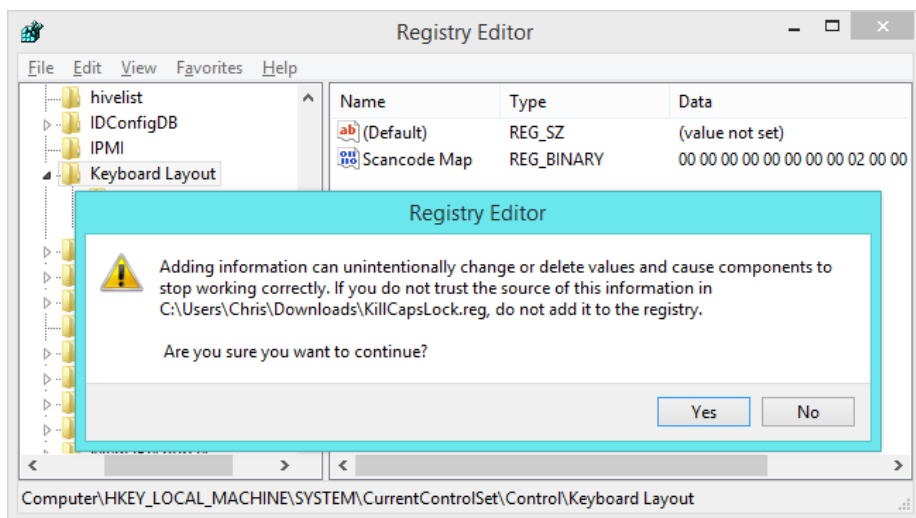
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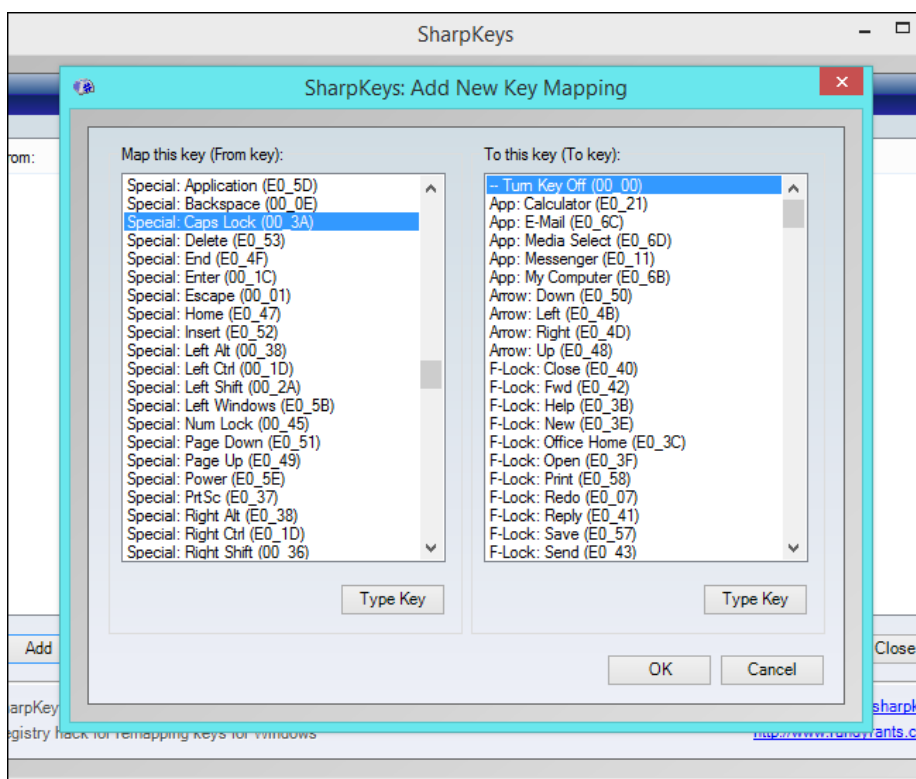
Windows

Windows doesn't provide a nice, easy graphical option for controlling your Caps Lock key. Instead, you'll need to remap the key in the registry. Don't worry — we'll make this easier than it sounds!

There are several ways you can do this. By changing the Scancode Map value in the registry, you can remap your Caps Lock to function as another key or even do nothing at all when you press it. [Download our .reg files to do this in a few clicks or learn how to modify the Scancode Map value on your own.](#) You can still use Caps Lock for some functions after disabling the Caps Lock function — it makes a nice push-to-talk button in voice communication applications like Mumble or Ventrilo.



If you'd like to reassign Caps Lock to something else without messing around in the registry, follow [our guide to turning your Caps Lock key into a Search key](#). You don't have to make it a Search key, of course — that's just one example. This process uses SharpKeys to quickly create a registry entry for you. By associating the key with a shortcut in Windows, you can have the key do many other things — launch a program, for example.



Linux

The Ubuntu desktop used to have an easy option to disable Caps Lock, but this option has been gone for several versions — it's certainly not there in [Ubuntu 14.04](#). Many people recommend installing and using GNOME Tweak Tool, which offers a graphical option for this. The Tweak Tool is available in the Ubuntu Software Center. Select the Typing category and change the Caps Lock key behavior option.

Tweak Tool works for GNOME-based desktops, but here's another solution that should work on any desktop environment. Run the following command in a terminal window to disable the Caps Lock:

```
setxkbmap -option caps:none
```

You can also use other options instead of "caps:none":

caps:numlock – Caps Lock becomes an additional Num Lock.

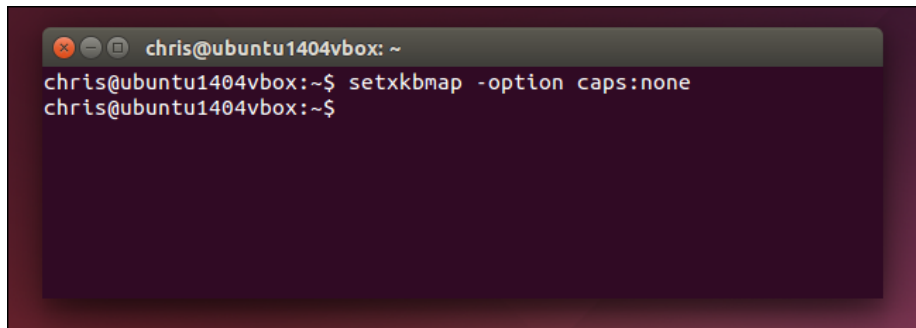
caps:swapescape – Caps Lock becomes Escape, and Escape becomes Caps Lock

caps:escape – Caps Lock becomes an additional Escape.

caps:backspace – Caps Lock becomes an additional Backspace.

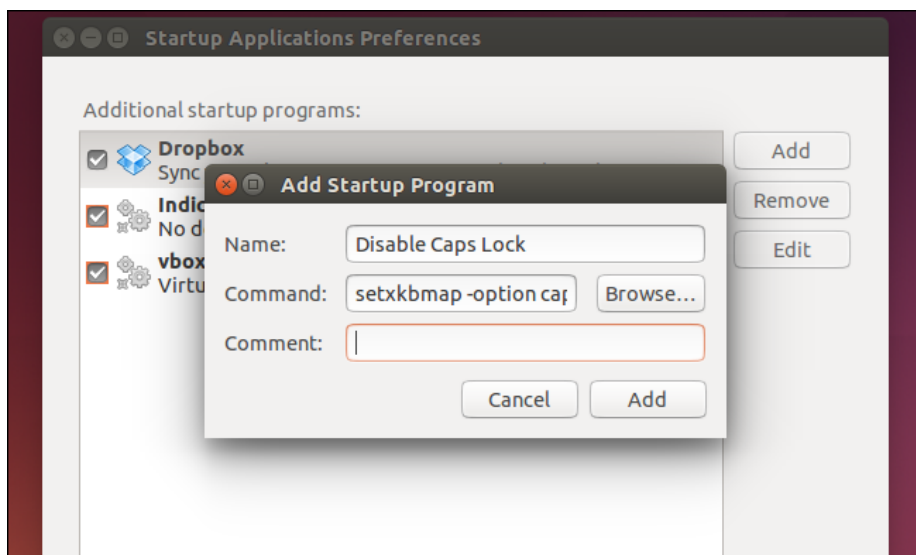
caps:super – Caps Lock becomes an additional Super. (Super is also known as the Windows key.)

There are other options you can use — and you can bind Caps Lock to any key using other tools — but these are the options most users will probably want.



```
chris@ubuntu1404vbox: ~  
chris@ubuntu1404vbox:~$ setxkbmap -option caps:none  
chris@ubuntu1404vbox:~$
```

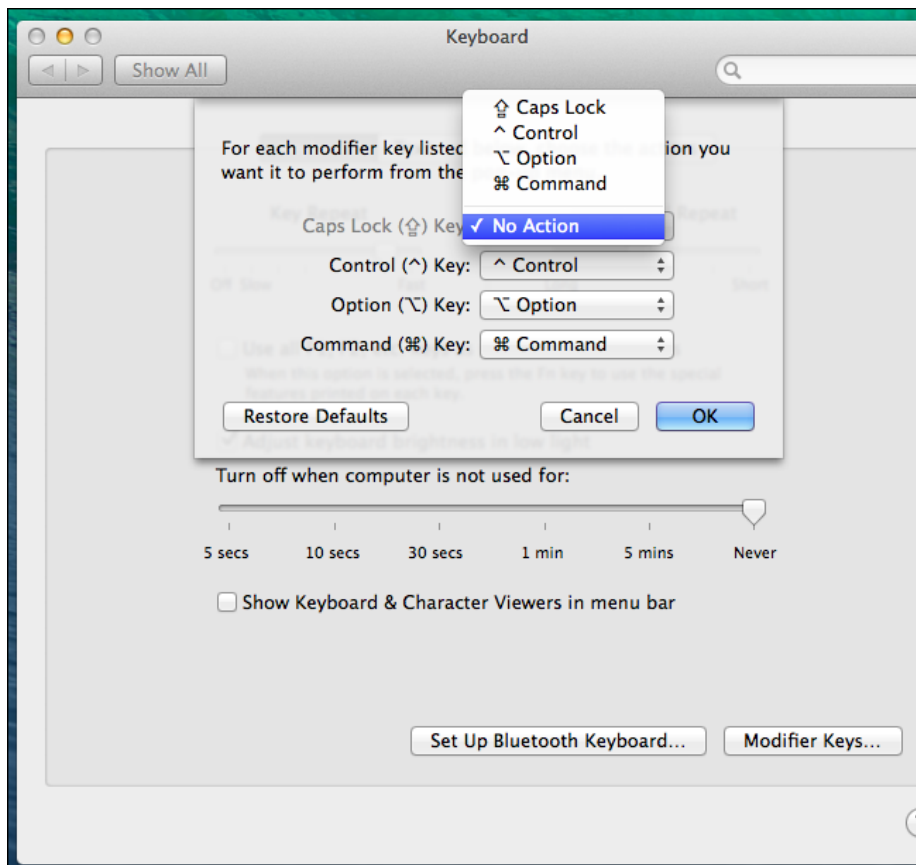
To make this setting persist between system reboots, you'll need to have your command of choice run at startup. On Ubuntu, open the dash, search for "Start," and launch the Start-up applications dialog. You can also press Alt+F2, type **gnome-session-properties** into the Run dialog, and press Enter. Add the command to your list of startup commands and it will run when you log in.



Mac OS X

This is much easier on a Mac. Click the Apple menu button on the bar at the top of your screen and select System Preferences. Click the Keyboard icon in the System Preferences window.

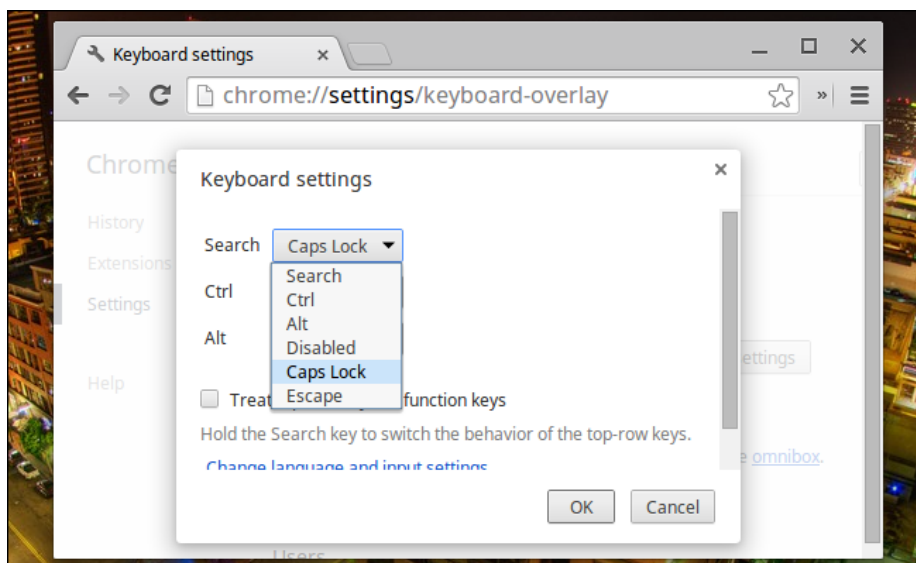
Click the Modifier Keys button near the bottom of the window and use the options here to change what your Caps Lock key does. You can have it perform "No Action," effectively disabling it, or you can have it function as an additional Control, [Option, or Command key](#).



Chrome OS

Chromebooks don't come with a Caps Lock key — instead, there's a Search key where Caps Lock would be. You can change the search key to function like a Caps Lock key if you really need it, though — just visit your Chromebook's Settings page, scroll down, and click Keyboard settings under Device, and change the Search key to function as a Caps Lock key.

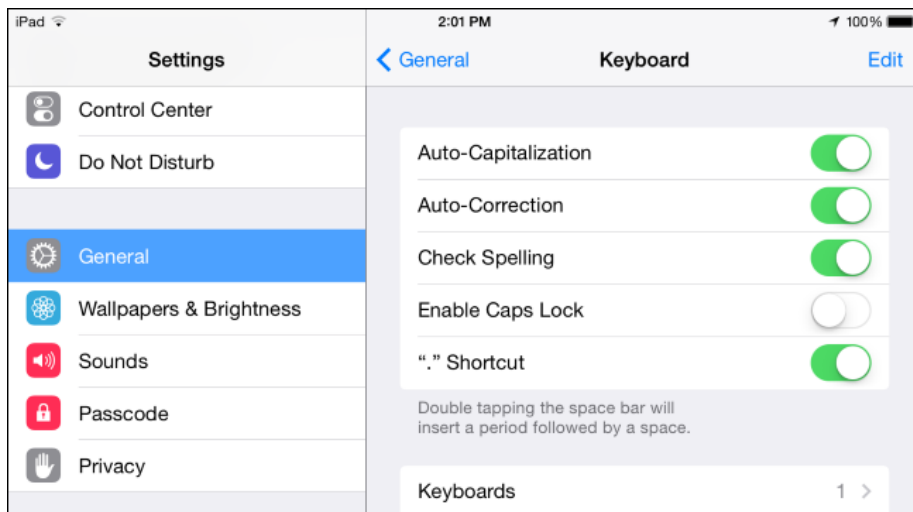
If you just need Caps Lock once in a while, [press Alt + Search to toggle Caps Lock](#).



iOS

Double-tap the Shift key on an iPhone or iPad keyboard and it will enable Caps Lock. If you never want to use Caps Lock on these devices, you can disable it to prevent this from happening. Open the Settings app, tap the General category, and tap Keyboard. Set the "Enable Caps Lock" slider to Off.

Unfortunately, iOS doesn't offer a way to disable Caps Lock on [external keyboards connected via Bluetooth](#).

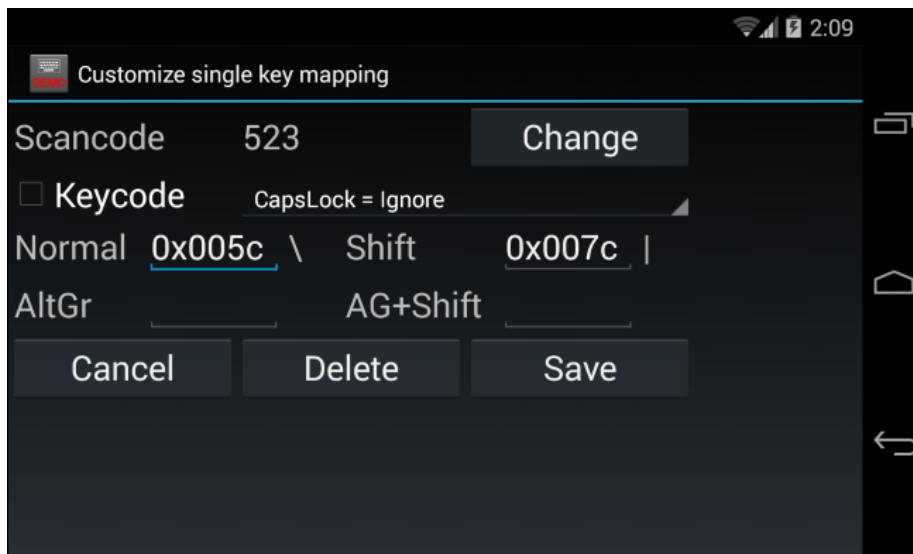


Android

On Android, individual software keyboards may have an option that disables Caps Lock. [Android's default "Google Keyboard"](#) doesn't provide an option to disable Caps Lock.

You can remap hardware keys on [external, physical keyboards](#), but this either [requires root access](#) or a paid app. Neither option is ideal, but at least it's possible — it's not possible to remap what buttons do on an external keyboard connected to an iPad.

There's a good (but complicated) [tutorial for the root method on XDA Developers](#). You can also use [External Keyboard Helper Pro](#), which doesn't require root but will cost you a few bucks. There's [a demo version of the app](#) you can try out, but it prints a message saying you're using a demo every time you press the Space button — it's only ideal to test out, not to actually use.



Hopefully, device manufacturers will start to get the message about Caps Lock. Some Windows laptop manufacturers are already beginning to drop the Caps Lock key, and all Chromebooks have the Caps Lock key perform a more useful function. Google had the right idea with Chromebooks — by default, the key does something useful for everyone. However, if you really need Caps Lock, you can easily make the key function as Caps Lock. There's even a keyboard shortcut that quickly toggles Caps Lock — it's just hard to press by accident.

Image Credit: [Dan Goodwin on Flickr](#)

JOIN THE DISCUSSION (10 REPLIES)

Chris Hoffman is a technology writer and all-around computer geek. He's at home using the Linux terminal as he is digging into the Windows registry. Connect with him on [Google+](#).

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