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## Is there a keyboard shortcut to “unselect” in Windows Explorer?

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48

If I've got a file (or files) selected in Windows Explorer, the only way I've found to "unselect" them is click with the mouse on some empty space.



★  
17

I thought `Esc` would do this, but it doesn't. Also changing focus with `Tab` or `Shift` + `Tab` doesn't work; the file(s) are still selected even if focus goes to the address bar for instance.

Does anyone know of a keyboard shortcut to do this'?

[windows](#)[keyboard-shortcuts](#)[windows-explorer](#)

asked Dec 4 '09 at 17:37



[Adam Neal](#)

383 1 3 8

I was thinking of implementing a Unselect All feature in an app that I'm developing and I was thinking Ctrl+Shift+A would make a lot of sense. So far I haven't found any examples of other apps using this shortcut though. What do you think? – [jpierson](#) Aug 23 '10 at 14:31

## 9 Answers



61



You can use [Ctrl](#) + [Arrow](#) to move among selected items. [Ctrl](#) + [Space](#) will select/deselect. ([Space](#) alone will select but not deselect.)

edited Feb 15 '16 at 2:12



[Rohit Gupta](#)

449 3 7 18

answered Dec 4 '09 at 17:43



[Michael Itzoe](#)

1,072 1 14 20

3 That really felt like I'm a super user. Works in windows 8. – [Gellie Ann](#) Dec 8 '16 at 1:11



As far as I know there isn't a keyboard shortcut for Invert Selection in Windows Explorer, and unfortunately Select

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All doesn't toggle the selection.



So if you really want an all keyboard solution:

Ctrl + A, Alt + E, I

If you're used to Emacs multi-key bindings then this shouldn't bother you. :)

answered Dec 4 '09 at 17:52



[Darren Hall](#)

6,134 1 21 23

- 
- 1 Alt + E, I has no effect. At least, in Win7 Explorer. – [ivan\\_pozdeev](#) Feb 28 '18 at 13:02
- 



4

I also found another quick solution: pressing F5 will refresh the folder and deselect single or multiple items.



answered Dec 22 '09 at 14:06



[Adam Neal](#)

383 1 3 8

- 
- 2 Did not deselect a single selection, but ctrl+space as suggested in another answer does work. – [angularsen](#) Oct 5 '12 at 12:23
- 



3

Pulling from the other solutions here, the method that works every time is Ctrl+A then F5. You can sort of roll your hand up the keyboard to do this.



Even though it's an extra step over just Ctrl+Spacebar when deselecting one item or just F5 when more than one item is selected, the consistency and not having to think each time will save time in the long run, I think.

Note: If you are pressing F5, then it makes no difference whether you press CTRL-A first or don't. CTRL-A is Select All, F5 is Refresh. Therefore, if F5 is acceptable for the functionality you're looking for, there is no benefit to pressing CTRL-A prior.

edited Aug 12 '13 at 16:39



LawrenceC

60.2k 12 105 182

answered Oct 31 '12 at 12:31



Nick

31 1



0



+ and then will also do the trick -- I guess the same as , but is it one more way to do it.

edited Jun 2 '18 at 7:15



Peter Mortensen

8,431 16 61 85

answered Dec 22 '09 at 14:14



DMin

131 3



-1





Here is one more possible answer. It is a combination of three keys.

**Press the keyboard-right-click key. Press**

**(properties). Press** .

**User warning:** This should right click the item, go to properties, and exit the properties menu. Make sure this is what is happening, and that isn't a key that ends up

deleting your item or doing anything else.

Other than that,  +  is the best answer I have seen here so far.

edited Jun 2 '18 at 7:22



Peter Mortensen







8,431 16 61 85

answered Feb 13 '16 at 2:14






Harman Nieves

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▲  
-2  
▼ I could not find any documentation on Microsoft's websites regarding  +  for deselection of items. However, on an unrelated website, [https://winscp.net/eng/docs/ui\\_explorer\\_key](https://winscp.net/eng/docs/ui_explorer_key), there is documentation regarding WinSCP, a free SFTP/FTP/SCP client for Windows. It uses some shortcuts that are also applicable to the Windows OS, such as  +  for file selection/deselect. However  +  does work, as stated above.

Anyway, the only different answer so far I could offer is:

*Press key  to delete your file, then press  +  to bring it back. Now you have unselected it.*

**User warning:** it may have *unintended consequences*. Such as if you have configured files for permanent deletion and may not be brought back easily, as is the case in some external hard disk drives. **Use this answer with caution.**

edited Jun 2 '18 at 7:20



Peter Mortensen

8,431 16 61 85

answered Feb 11 '16 at 23:34



Harman Nieves

5 1

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- 2 This is a bit treacherous, to say the least. On network drives, for instance, deletion is permanent! – Ben N Feb 14 '16 at 20:58
- 



CTRL+A actually toggles selection, so doing it twice will do the thing.

-3



answered Feb 17 '17 at 14:17



rmsoft

1

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- 1 This is contradicted by another answer which states the opposite- care to clarify? – bertieb Feb 17 '17 at 17:46
- 
- 1 A third-party app or plugin may give it this "feature", but no, in Windows Explorer, CTRL-A does NOT toggle a selection. Pressing it once selects all files, pressing it again while all files are already selected does nothing. Using it to select all and then holding CTRL and unselecting a few entries, and then using CTRL-A again returns the selection to All. – music2myear Feb 17 '17 at 18:27
- 



CTRL+D Works fine in Windows 10.

-3



Viz <https://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/library/cc294603.aspx>

answered Mar 29 '17 at 9:43



user712226

1

- 
- 2 Kindly edit your answer and explain not just use the Link

2 Kindly edit your answer and explain not just use the link – yass Mar 29 '17 at 10:51

1 Although your answer is 100% correct, it might also become 100% useless if that link is moved, changed, merged into another one or the main site just disappears... :-( Therefore, please [edit](#) your answer, and copy the relevant steps from the link into your answer, thereby guaranteeing your answer for 100% of the lifetime of this site! ;-) You can always leave the link in at the bottom of your answer as a source for your material... – Donald Duck Mar 29 '17 at 11:57

2 @donald Was this a joke? Ctrl-D deletes files in explorer. The link is for expression studio 2. – user5389726598465 May 4 '17 at 2:40

@user135711 No, it's not a joke. I got it from [here](#). I also suggest you read the other answers on that page because they explain very well why you're not supposed to post link-only answers like this one. – Donald Duck May 4 '17 at 12:11

1 The linked page is for Expression Studio 2, not for Explorer. In Explorer, this shortcut is Delete. – ivan\_pozdeev Feb 28 '18 at 13:08

protected by [Community](#) ♦ Feb 28 '18 at 14:37

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