



[Microsoft At Home](#) > [Articles](#) > [Get More Done](#)

## Save time with quick computer shortcuts

Learn keyboard combinations to quickly access programs, functions, and documents

Published: September 20, 2004  
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As a new mom, Rachel Brown is always looking for ways to save time. "When I have the chance to sit down at my computer, I need to get at what I'm working on as quickly as possible," says Brown, who uses her computer to keep in touch with family and friends.

Brown discovered the power of shortcuts and keystrokes while she was still working. "Before taking my maternity leave, I worked in a bilingual environment," she explains. "I learned the keystrokes for the French accents that were essential in all of my correspondence." She also learned a few other time-saving tricks such as highlighting text, using the Bold function, and creating new documents.

If you're looking to work more efficiently in Microsoft [Word](#), [Excel](#), or [Internet Explorer](#), the key is using programmed shortcuts.



### On This Page

- ↓ [Driving around your desktop](#)
- ↓ [Working with Word](#)
- ↓ [Accelerating Excel](#)
- ↓ [Expediting Internet Explorer](#)

### Related Links

- [5 useful Windows XP tricks](#)
- [Use single-click everywhere](#)
- [Other keyboard shortcuts in Word](#)
- [Crabby's top 5 Excel tips and tricks](#)
- [Other Excel shortcut and function keys](#)
- [10 time-saving tips for Internet Explorer](#)
- [Work faster and smarter on the Web](#)
- [Shop for products that work with Windows](#)

### Driving around your desktop

To...	Use this shortcut
Select a file/folder/icon	Type the first letter of the file. If you have several files starting with the same letter, continue hitting the letter key until your cursor lands on the file or folder you want.
Search for a file/folder	F3
Rename a file/folder	Select the file/folder, click F2, and then re-type the name
Find out when the file or folder was created, by whom, and how big it is	Select the file, right-click, and then click <b>Properties</b>
Display the Start menu	Ctrl + Esc
Create a shortcut on your desktop to your favorite file/folder	Drag the file/folder icon to your desktop

### Support Guides

- [Communications](#)
- [Setup and Maintenance](#)

Scroll between open items	Alt + Tab, then hold down Alt while clicking Tab to reach the desired file or program
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[↑ Top of page](#)

## Working with Word

To...	Use this shortcut
Select text	Shift + Right Arrow, Left Arrow, Up Arrow, or Down Arrow to highlight text
Copy selected text	Ctrl + C
Cut selected text	Ctrl + X
Paste selected text	Ctrl + V
Undo your last action	Ctrl + Z
Select all the text within your document	Ctrl + A
Bold text	Ctrl + B
Italicize text	Ctrl + I
Underline	Ctrl + U
Decrease font size	Ctrl + Shift + <
Increase font size	Ctrl + Shift + >
Change font	Ctrl + Shift + F, then use the arrow keys to reach the new font
Change font size	Ctrl + Shift + P, then use the arrow keys to reach the new font size
Create page break	Ctrl + Enter
Create new document	Ctrl + N
Open My Documents window	Ctrl + O
Close a document	Ctrl + W
Save a document	Ctrl + S
Print a document	Ctrl + P
Preview what you're about to print	Alt + Ctrl + I

[↑ Top of page](#)

## Accelerating Excel

To...	Use this shortcut
Move right to left, cell by cell	Tab

Move up and down, cell by cell	Enter
Erase data in current cell	Backspace
Return to the beginning of the row	Home
Enter the date	Ctrl + ; (semicolon)
Enter the time	Ctrl + Shift + : (colon)
Start a formula	= (equal sign)
Check the spelling of titles or words within the cells	F7
Find out about the style within the cell	ALT + ' (apostrophe)
Display the Format Cells dialog box	Ctrl + 1
Apply the general number format	Ctrl + Shift + ~
Turn numbers into dollars	Ctrl + Shift + \$
Make numbers a percentage	Ctrl + Shift + %
Apply a border	Ctrl + Shift + &

[↶ Top of page](#)

## Expediting Internet Explorer

To...	Use this shortcut
Add sites to your Favorites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Go to the site.</li> <li>Hit Ctrl + D to add to your Favorites.</li> <li>Select <b>Favorites</b> and then <b>Add to Favorites</b> to create a separate folder for the site or to add it to a list already formed.</li> </ul>
Select a home page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Go to the Web page that you would like to make your home page.</li> <li>Open the <b>Tools</b> menu and select <b>Internet Options</b>.</li> <li>Under <b>Home page</b>, click <b>Use Current</b>.</li> </ul>
Use the History function if you visit a few select sites constantly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select the <b>History</b> button on your top navigation (a green arrow on a clock face).</li> <li>Select the site that you would like and double-click.</li> <li>If the <b>History</b> button is not visible, go to the <b>View</b> menu, select <b>Explorer Bar</b>, and then click <b>History</b> to access.</li> </ul>
Customize your toolbar to the tools you use most	

frequently

- Right-click your top navigation.
- Select the icons that you use or go to the **View** menu, select **Toolbars**, and then click **Customize**.

A final piece of advice from Brown: Have the Help Line numbers for all the products you use nearby. "At work you rely on your IT person to solve problems that come up, but at home you need to fix these on your own and those phone numbers become extremely useful," she says.

The more you use these tools, the more time you will save. Have fun and explore the options available to you.

Article written by Liz Eustace and adapted from an original piece from [Microsoft Home Magazine](#).

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[↑ Top of page](#)

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