

# Excel Keyboard Shortcuts Tips and Techniques

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# 1. Keyboard Tips

Over the years I have found Excel users tend to be split into two camps. They either use keyboard shortcuts or mouse shortcuts. The split is loosely correlated with age. The older you are, the more likely the keyboard is your weapon of choice.

Excel has hundreds of keyboard shortcuts and, depending on the type of work you do, you can save a lot of time and effort by learning and using just a few. Obviously the more shortcuts you learn, the more time and effort you can save.

To get the most from this session take note of what you consider are the most useful shortcuts and start incorporating them in your use of Excel. It may be a little slower at first, but persevere and you will start to make time and effort savings.

I will also be doing a separate webinar on mouse shortcuts. That session will include using the mouse and keyboard together which extends the number of shortcuts even further.

I tend to use both mouse and keyboard but can lean toward one or the other depending on the task at hand. I know of some users who actually place their mouse a distance from their hand to force them to use the keyboard more and they believe it increases their productivity. I will be attempting to use the keyboard as much as possible during this session.

Many tasks can be done quicker with the keyboard if the data is laid out well.

The last page of the manual has my most commonly used keyboard shortcuts. The manual will cover many that I know other people use frequently.

There are three keys that can be used individually or together for keyboard shortcuts.

The **Ctrl** key has the most shortcuts and is the most popular. It is also easy to select as it is on the left and right corners of the keyboard.

The other two keys are the **Shift** key and the **Alt** key. These have fewer shortcuts but still have many useful ones.

You can also use two of these keys together to extend the number of shortcuts.

The Function keys also have a lot of shortcuts.

In Excel 2007 and later versions you can **UNDO** actions after you Save. The keyboard shortcut for UNDO is **Ctrl+ z**.

The **F4** key is also useful as it can repeat the last process completed.

Many of these shortcuts will work in the rest of Microsoft Office.

## 2. The Control (Ctrl) Key

### Copying, Pasting and Cutting

Virtually all users are aware of **Ctrl + c** to copy, **Ctrl + x** to cut and **Ctrl + v** to paste.

What many users are unaware of is that after you have copied, you can press the Enter key to paste once.

**Ctrl + v** allows you to paste multiple times

In Excel cutting is different than Microsoft Word. When you cut in Excel, the cell or range is not removed until you paste it. The Enter key will also paste once after using cut.

When you use the **Enter** key to paste it clears the clipboard.

Pressing the **Esc** key also clears the clipboard.

### Saving

I frequently use **Ctrl + s** to save my current file. I do not use the auto save feature as I like to control when my files are saved.

### Pasting With No Relative Reference Changes

To copy the value from the cell above use **Ctrl + ' (Ctrl + single inverted comma)**. For formulas this copies the exact formula with no relative reference changes.

There is another way to copy and paste a cell formula to another cell without relative reference changes - I will share that later in the session.

### Multiple entries

To enter the same value, or formula, into a range of cells, first select the range then type the entry and press **Ctrl + Enter**. This works for both formulas and data entries.

## Other Useful Control key shortcuts

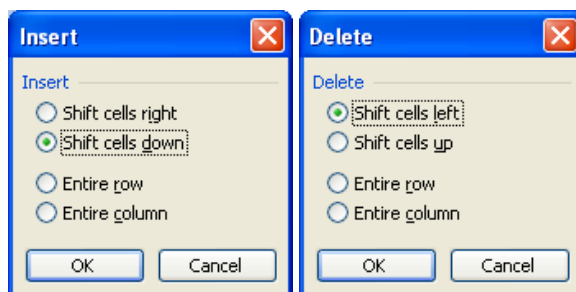
<b>Ctrl + ; (semi-colon)</b>	Inserts the current date
<b>Ctrl + Home</b>	Takes you to the top, left of the sheet
<b>Ctrl + End</b>	Takes to the last used cell (bottom right) - it is the intersection of the last used row and last used column and may be empty.
<b>Ctrl + Arrow keys</b>	Navigate around the sheet in the four directions very quickly. It jumps between filled cell and empty cells.
<b>Ctrl + Page Down</b>	Selects the sheet to the right
<b>Ctrl + Page Up</b>	Selects the page to the left
<b>Ctrl + k</b>	Opens the Insert Hyperlink dialog
<b>Ctrl + 1</b>	Opens the Formats Cell dialog
<b>Ctrl + t</b>	Format as table
<b>Ctrl + F1</b>	Hides / shows the ribbon
<b>Ctrl + Tab</b>	Moves between open files
<b>Ctrl + d</b>	Copies the first cell down in a selected range
<b>Ctrl + r</b>	Copies the first cell to the right in a selected range

## Inserting and Deleting

<b>Ctrl + +</b>	Inserts (select a row/column first to insert those)
<b>Ctrl + - (minus)</b>	Deletes (select a row/column first to delete those)

## Insert and Delete Warning

The two dialogs below are very **DANGEROUS** and you need to be very careful how you respond to the dialog.



**WARNING:** Whenever you see these dialogs think very carefully before Pressing Enter or clicking OK. The top two options will alter the structure of your spreadsheet and can cause formula to display #REF! error messages.

The keyboard shortcuts for selecting whole rows and whole columns are

**Ctrl + space bar** selects the current column(s)

An easy way to remember this shortcut is that both Column and Ctrl start with c. This shortcut works slightly differently in a formatted Table - it will only select the column within the table.

### Selecting tables

Using **Ctrl + \*** selects the current region – useful for selecting tables quickly. I use the \* on the numeric keypad.

### Dependents and Precedents

<b>Ctrl + [</b>	Follows a link
<b>Ctrl + ]</b>	Find linked cells

To return Press **F5** then press Enter

<b>Ctrl + . (full stop)</b>	In a selected range this will take you around the corners of the range. Useful for larger ranges
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<b>Ctrl + ` (key under Esc key)</b>	shows and hides all formulas on the sheet. It affects the printing of the sheet when displaying formulas.
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<b>Ctrl + Pause/Break</b>	Stops a macro and allows you to view the code.
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### 3. The Shift Key

There are not many keyboard shortcuts with the Shift key alone. There are many with the Shift key used with other keys and these are listed in the section Key Combinations.

#### Selecting large ranges

Holding the **Shift** key down whilst using the **arrow keys**, or the **Page Up** or **Page Down** keys, can make selecting large ranges easier.

- |                      |                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Shift + F2</b>    | will create or edit a cell comment (post it note for a cell)                                                    |
| <b>Shift + Home</b>  | selects all the cells between the current cell and column A                                                     |
| <b>Shift + F11</b>   | creates a new sheet                                                                                             |
| <b>Shift + Space</b> | selects the whole row. Works slightly differently in a formatted table it only selects the row within the table |

## 4. The Alt Key

The Alt key is the most underutilised shortcut key. It has lots of useful shortcuts that can be quicker than the mouse.

### Line break in a cell

Whilst editing in a cell or the formula bar this shortcut will insert a line break in a cell use **Alt + Enter**. This is a hard line break and not the Wrap Text format. This is the only way to achieve this.

### Visible cells

To copy only the visible cells ie omit any cells in hidden rows or hidden columns, you select the range as normal, but then press **Alt + ;** (Alt + semi-colon) then copy and then paste.

**Note:** this technique will not paste formulas.

### SUM keyboard shortcut

To automatically enter the SUM function in a cell or range use **Alt + =**.

### Quick Access Toolbar (QAT)

The QAT is where you should place your most used icons. I will cover the QAT in more detail in the mouse shortcuts session.

### QAT + Alt key

The order that you place the icons on the QAT can be used with a shortcut key to speed up using the icons.

If you press the Alt key you will notice that all the icons on the QAT have a number – you can use that Alt and the number combination to perform the icons task with only the keyboard. The first nine are the easiest to use. You press the alt key then press the number.



## Useful Alt Key Shortcut Sequences

<b>Alt h w</b>	Wrap Text - turns on or off
<b>Alt h v v</b>	Paste Values - after a copy
<b>Alt w f f</b>	Freeze Panes - turns on or off based on the current selection, keeps the row and column headers visible.
<b>Alt a v v</b>	Data Validation - opens the Data Validation dialog, commonly used for in-cell drop down lists
<b>Alt h e f</b>	Removes all formats
<b>Alt h o r</b>	Renames current sheet
<b>Alt w g</b>	Zooms current range
<b>Alt w j</b>	Zooms to 100%
<b>Alt p b i</b>	Inserts a page break
<b>Alt p b r</b>	Removes a page break
<b>Alt h s s</b>	Sort table ascending
<b>Alt h s o</b>	Sort tables descending
<b>Alt w l</b>	Normal View
<b>Alt w i</b>	Page Break View
<b>Alt w p</b>	Page Layout View (looks like MS Word)
<b>Alt w e</b>	Full Screen mode - press Esc to return to normal
<b>Alt p r s</b>	Set Print area
<b>Alt p i</b>	Set Print titles
<b>Alt + down arrow</b>	Opens a drop down list of entries already in a column
<b>Alt + F8</b>	Opens the Macro dialog
<b>Alt + F11</b>	Opens the VBA window

## 5. Function Keys

**F2** - To edit an entry in a cell, select the cell and press **F2**. You can also double click the cell.

To move around once you are editing in a cell use **Home** and **End** to go to either end of the entry.

Use the **Shift** key with the arrow keys to select a specific part of the entry.

You can copy and paste part of a cell entry (including the formula) by selecting the characters whilst in the edit mode and pressing **Ctrl + c** to capture the characters and then going to the destination cell and pressing **Ctrl + v**. This only works on one cell.

### Formula/Reference Dialog Frustration

In some dialogs when you use the arrows keys to try and move around the formula you insert a reference from the sheet. This is frustrating. To fix it press the **F2** key as soon as the dialogs opens and you can then edit the formula or reference using arrow keys to move around.

### Useful Functions keys

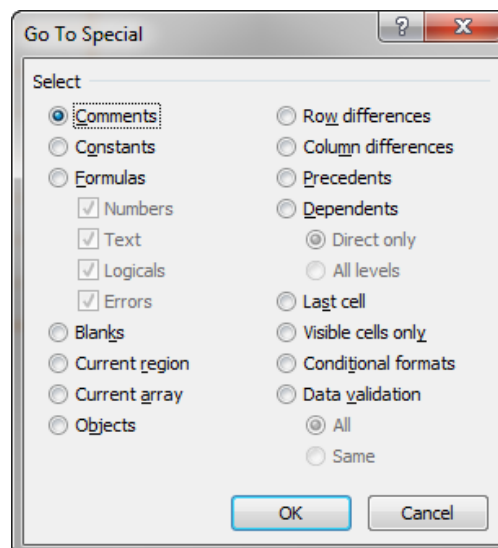
**F2** edits in the current cell

**F4** repeats the last action you have done. Also amends the \$ signs in formulas see next section.

**F5** is Goto – the Special button allows you to select many types of cells in one step - see below.

**F7** starts Spell Check

**F12** opens the Save As dialog



## 6. Formula Entry

You can use the + key to start all formula instead of the = key. Use the + key on the numeric keypad on the right of the keyboard. It's quicker and easier and makes no difference to the formula. Excel will add the = sign when you enter the formula.

When using fixed or mixed references ie \$ signs in references. You can use the **F4** key to insert them quickly. Pressing the **F4** key next to a cell reference will cycle through the following references in this order.

\$A\$1   A\$1   \$A1   A1

You can also select a group of references when editing a formula to apply the \$ signs using **F4**.

### **PRACTICE** – using fixed and mixed references

- 1      In the Formula sheet enter a formula in cell D6 that can be copied across and down to calculate all the costs
- 2      The formula needs to allocate the totals input in column B across the whole year using the days in row 4 to allocate the costs.
- 3      See next page for the formula
- 4      Enter the SUM function in column P to validate

To move around once you are editing in a cell use Home and End keys to go to either end of the entry.

### **Separate calculation in the Formula Bar**

If you have a formula that is showing an error, you can see the result of part of the formula by selecting the part and pressing **F9**. The part you select must be able to calculate on its own.

You can use the keyboard (hold Shift down and use the arrows keys) to select part of a formula to copy and paste it.

### **Copy without the relative reference issue**

To copy and paste a formula without \$ sign but still keeping the same references you can copy the whole formula in the formula bar and then paste. Only works for a single formula.

Cell D6 formula from previous page

**=B6\*D\$4/\$P\$4**

## 7. Key Combinations

### Selecting Ranges

Using **Ctrl + Shift + Arrow** keys can select large ranges quickly.

**Ctrl + Shift + Home** will select the current cell, back to the top left cell of the sheet.

### Applying Grouping

Grouping allows you to hide and unhide rows and columns very quickly. Hidden rows/columns do not print.

To apply grouping select the range and use the following keyboard shortcuts.

**Shift + Alt + right arrow** – applies grouping

**Shift + Alt + left arrow** – removes grouping

**Note:** selecting another range and pressing **F4** will repeat a grouping action.

**Ctrl + Shift + L** - adds or removes filter in a table

**Ctrl + Shift + \$** - applies \$#,###.## number format

**Ctrl + Shift + !** - applies #,###.## number format

**Ctrl + Shift + #** - applies date format d-mmm-yy

**Ctrl + Shift + %** - applies % format

**Ctrl + Shift + &** - applies thin outline border

**Ctrl + Shift + F3** - creates named ranges based on cell labels.

## 8. Shortcuts I Use Regularly

Ctrl + *	Selects entire table
Ctrl + ;	Today's date
Ctrl + '	Copy from cell above
Ctrl + arrows	Navigation
Ctrl + s	Save
Ctrl + Home	Top left of sheet
Ctrl + +	Insert row(s) or column(s)
Ctrl + -	Deletes row(s) or column(s)
Ctrl + Shift + F3	Create Range Names
Ctrl + Shift + arrows	Range selection
Shift + arrows	Selecting ranges
Shift + Alt + Right arrow	Apply grouping
Shift + Alt + Left arrow	Remove grouping
Alt + F11	Open VBA window
Alt + W + F + F	Freeze Panes
Alt + A + V + V	Data Validation
Alt + H + W	Apply wrap text
F2	Edit cell or reference
F4	Repeat action or add \$ signs in formula
F5	Access Special button or return after hyperlink
F12	Save As
Esc	Closes dialogs