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Everyday keyboard shortcuts to help you work faster [1]

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Small shortcuts can make a big difference in your productivity. Whether you're moving between applications, searching your device or navigating files, keyboard shortcuts help you work faster and more efficiently.

Quick navigation & window management

1. Switch between open applications

Quickly move between your open windows without reaching for your mouse.

- **Windows:** *hold* Alt + *press* Tab
- **Mac:** Command + Tab

2. Open Task View or Mission Control

Both tools give you an organized view of the windows and desktops you have open, which is helpful when working across multiple applications. Review the Tech Tip post, Using Task View in Windows [3] or Mission Control on Mac [4], for full instructions.

- **Windows Task View:** Windows logo key + Tab
- **Mac Mission Control:** Control + Up Arrow

3. Snap windows into place (Windows)

Arrange your workspace with quick side-by-side layouts, perfect for working between documents or comparing data.

- **Snap left:** Windows logo key + Left Arrow
- **Snap right:** Windows logo key + Right Arrow

4. Show your desktop instantly

When your screen gets cluttered, clear the view instantly with a single shortcut.

- **Windows:** Windows logo key + D
- **Mac:** Fn + F11 (or Command + F3 on some keyboards)

Press the shortcut again to return to your original view — your windows will remain open.

5. Open File Explorer or Finder

A fast way to open and browse your files and folders.

- **Windows File Explorer:** Windows logo key + E
- **Mac Finder:** Option + Command + Space

6. Universal search

Quickly search apps, files, settings and more using your device's built-in search tools.

- **Windows Search:** Windows logo key + S
- **Mac Spotlight Search:** Command + Space

7. Use Clipboard History to save time copying and pasting (Windows)

If you copy and paste frequently, Clipboard History lets you reuse items you copied earlier — no need to switch back and copy them again. You can also pin a copied item to retain it indefinitely. It's helpful for keeping common symbols like an em dash (—), code snippets or email templates just a click away.

Read our Pin it once — use it forever with Windows Clipboard [5] tip to learn how to turn it on and use it effectively.

8. Quick access to system controls (Windows 11)

- **Open Quick Settings:** Windows logo key + A
  Access Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, brightness, sound and more.
- **Open Notification Center:** Windows logo key + N
  View alerts, Teams notifications, calendar items and system messages.

9. Lock your computer

A fast, secure way to step away from your desk.

- **Windows:** Windows logo key + L
- **Mac:** Control + Command + Q

If shortcuts aren't working as expected on Windows

If shortcuts that rely on F-keys (like F11 or F5) aren't working, your keyboard may have **Fn Lock** enabled. Toggle it using **Fn + Esc** or a dedicated Fn Lock key, if your device has one. This setting determines whether F-keys control system actions (like volume or brightness) or traditional function-key shortcuts.

What's the best way for you to learn new keyboard shortcuts? Let us know!

Do you find blog posts like this one — sorted by application or task — the most helpful? Are shorter lists easier to retain? Would visual aids like a printable "cheat sheet" or PDF help you to remember shortcuts quicker? What about weekly challenges to use a specific shortcut in CU System Connect?

Whatever way you learn best, we want to know! Your feedback will help inform the way future

keyboard shortcut tips are presented. Submit your suggestions by emailing us (UISCommunications@cu.edu [6]) or clicking the button below.

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