

By Kevin Purdy

Google wants you to spend your computer time connected to the web, because, hey - that's where quite a few of its ads can be found. To make the web feel more like your disk-less personal computer, the search giant installed shortcuts in most of its applications, like Gmail, Docs, Calendar, and Google+. But the list of shortcuts is huge, so we pared them down to the 40 most important ones. These are the [Google Apps](#) shortcuts you should start getting comfortable with because they can really save you time.

You'll still need a mouse to use Google's web-apps in full, but using keyboard shortcuts allows you to use the mouse less. That's particularly handy when you're typing out emails in Gmail or flowing through text in Docs. Plus, when you're mercilessly cleaning out your inbox, banging the "y" key to archive is remarkably therapeutic.

When you're ready to move on to mastering all of Google's shortcuts, hold shift and press the "/" key (basically, enter a question mark when outside a text field) in Gmail or Calendar to see the full list of keyboard shortcuts. For Docs, there is [this official list](#), and for the brand-new Google+, try [Simon Laustsen's Cheat Sheets](#).



Gmail

Shortcut	Description	Explanation
Gmail: From the inbox		
j/k	Next/previous conversation thread	Note the tiny black cursor that travels up and down the left rail of the messages. This shortcut is the most common in Google's Apps
o or Enter	Open conversation where the pointer is	
x	Select conversation	Scroll through messages with j/k, then tap "x" to mark messages for later action
n/p	Next/previous message in a thread	For when you're inside a message, having pressed "o" to enter.
c	Compose new message	
/	Jump to search box	If it doesn't work, try tapping Tab once or twice to re-focus on Gmail itself
q	Jump to contact list	Then start typing the name of a contact. Hit the right arrow to get more options: Chat, compose new message, etc.
g+i (g, then quickly i)	Heads back to the inbox from wherever you are.	Many more g+ (something) shortcuts exist-- hit "?" from the main Gmail screen to see them.
g+k	Heads to Gmail's Tasks windows	
g+l	Jumps to a specific message label (start typing the label name)	

Shortcut	Description	Explanation
g+p	Make a phone call with Google Voice	You'll need to install a plugin for Google video chat if you haven't already, and likely some USB headphones for a good call.
*+a	Select all conversations on the screen	Like the "g" key, the asterisk selection key can select many things. Hit "?" for the full list.
Viewing a message		
u	Head back to the list from a message.	The list could be your inbox, a search query, a label, etc.
y/e	Archive message	Both while reading the message and from the list (by selecting messages with j/k and x)
Shift+i/u	Mark as read/unread	Both from message and inbox views
r	Reply to message	But not "Reply All"
a	Reply-all to a message	Use caution, of course
f	Forward a message	
"+" key" or -	Mark message as important or unimportant	For fine-tuning Priority Inbox. Works in message or inbox view

Google Calendar

Shortcut	Description	Explanation
c	Create event	Provides the full, multi-box input for creating an event
q	Quick add	Opens the short box for quick, semantic events: "1pm Friday Lunch with Jim at Shake Shack."
/	Focus search box	Find your events, rather than hunt them down
1,2,3,4,5	Cycle through Day, Week, Month, Custom, and Agenda views	"Custom" is a period of days you create in Settings (5 days, for example). d,w,x,m,a keys do the same thing.
j/k or n/p	Move through periods, based on calendar view: hours, days, etc.	


Google Docs

Shortcut	Description	Explanation
Standard Word text shortcuts	They all work	Ctrl+B for bold, Ctrl+i for italics, Ctrl+C/X/V for copy/cut/paste
Shift+Alt+f	Move focus to menu bar	The only way to get at all the stuff in the menus up top that lack shortcuts: File, Edit, View, etc.
Ctrl+Alt+1-5	Use header style	Header 1, Header 2, etc.
Ctrl+Shift+7	Apply numbered list style to selection	Need to select text without a mouse? Hold down shift while moving through text.
Ctrl+Shift+8	Apply bullet (non-numbered) list style to selection	
Ctrl+Shift+l, e, r	Change alignment to Left, Center (E), or Right	
Clear formatting	Ctrl+\	Particularly handy when dealing with text pasted from elsewhere
Ctrl+k	Insert link	Select text, hit Ctrl+K, then enter the URL you want the text to link to
Shift+right-click	Show your browser's right-click settings	Google Docs overrides your browser's right-click options with its own. This brings up the back, reload, save options
Ctrl+Shift+f	Compact controls	Get a semi-full-screen view. Press F11 in most browsers (or Shift-Command-F on Macs) for a true full screen.

Google +

Shortcut	Description	Explanation
Space / Shift+Space	Scroll down or up Stream	Whole pages at a time
j/k	Move down or up through individual posts	
Enter	Comment on post	
Shift+Enter	Create new line in comment	As opposed to using plain old Enter, which sends/finishes a comment. Don't worry if you slip up--hit "Edit" in lower right.
q	Jump to the chat selection window	As with Gmail, press right to choose options: Chat, show in chat window, etc.

Additional resources

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