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print screen on surface pro 3 keyboard

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Capturing Screenshots on the Surface /Pro /3: A Complete Guide to the Print Screen Key and Beyond

Whether you're a student, a professional, or simply a tech enthusiast, the ability to capture a screenshot on your Surface /Pro /3 can be a lifesaver. From documenting a bug in a Windows 10 application to saving a stunning photo of a landscape, a screenshot lets you preserve exactly what you see on your screen. But the Surface Pro 3's keyboard layout and the way Windows handles the Print Screen function can sometimes confuse even seasoned users. This article will walk you through every method you can use to take a screenshot, troubleshoot common problems, and make the most of the built in tools and third party options available to you.

Understanding the Surface /Pro /3 Keyboard Layout

The Surface /Pro /3 features a compact, detachable keyboard that combines the classic QWERTY layout with a few additional keys tailored for Windows. The keyboard's most important feature for screenshotting is the **Print /Screen** key, located in the upper right corner of the top row. It shares the same key as **PrtScn** on a standard PC keyboard, but because the Surface keyboard is designed for touch screen use, the key is slightly larger and easier to press with a thumb.

Below is a quick reference of the keys relevant to screenshotting:

- Print /Screen (PrtScn) – Captures the entire display.
- Windows /+ /Shift /+ /S – Opens the Snip & Sketch toolbar for custom snips.
- Alt /+ /Print /Screen – Captures only the active window.
- Windows /+ /PrtScn – Saves a full screen image directly to the Pictures library.

Because the Surface /Pro /3 runs Windows /10 (and newer), these shortcuts work the same way they do on any other Windows device. However, you might need to use a combination of the **Fn** key or the **Surface /Pro /3 keyboard's function mode** to access certain functions. For most screenshotting purposes, the Print Screen key and the Windows shortcuts are all you need.

Built in Screenshot Shortcuts

Windows offers several built in methods for capturing your screen. The most straightforward is the Print Screen key, but the system also provides a quick way to save a screenshot automatically or to copy it to the clipboard. Let's examine each method in detail.

Using the Print /Screen Key Alone

Pressing the **Print /Screen** key by itself copies the entire screen to the clipboard. It doesn't display any confirmation, so you'll need to paste the image into an editor like Microsoft Word, Paint, or an image editing program to see it.

1. Press Print /Screen (or PrtScn) on the Surface /Pro /3 keyboard.
2. Open an application that accepts image pasting (e.g., Paint).
3. Press Ctrl /+ /V to paste the screenshot.
4. Save the file if you wish.

This method is useful for quick, temporary captures that you plan to edit or share immediately.

Copying the Active Window with Alt /+ /Print /Screen

Sometimes you only need to capture the window you're currently working in. The **Alt /+ /Print /Screen** combination does just that.

1. Click on the window you want to capture to make it active.
2. Press Alt /+ /Print /Screen.
3. Paste the image into an editor.

Because the screenshot is copied to the clipboard, you can paste it wherever you need it.

Saving Screenshots Directly to the Pictures Library

If you want to avoid the clipboard step and automatically save the image, use the **Windows /+ /PrtScn** shortcut. This command captures the entire screen and writes a PNG file to *Pictures /!' /Screenshots*

1. Press Windows /+ /PrtScn.
2. Look for a brief flash on the screen indicating the capture was successful.
3. Navigate to Pictures /!' /Screenshots to find your file.

Each file is named automatically using the date and time of the capture, making it easy to sort chronologically.

Using the Snip & Sketch Toolbar

For more control over what you capture, Windows 10 offers the Snip & Sketch utility. It lets you select a region, a window, or even the entire screen.

1. Press Windows /+ /Shift /+ /S.
2. The screen will dim, and a toolbar will appear at the top.
3. Choose from the four options: rectangular snip, free form snip, window snip, or full screen snip.
4. Once you make a selection, the image is copied to the clipboard.
5. Open an editor and press Ctrl /+ /V to paste.

After pasting, you can annotate the screenshot using the built in editor before saving it.

Alternative Methods for Screenshotting

While the built in Windows shortcuts are powerful, you may want to explore additional options for different use cases. Below are several alternative methods you can use on a Surface /Pro /3.

Using the Surface Pen's One Finger Swipe

Some Surface models support a one finger swipe gesture using the Surface Pen to capture a screenshot. Unfortunately, the Surface /Pro /3 does not include this gesture natively, but you can enable it via the **Windows Ink Workspace** if you're running Windows /10 Creators Update or later.

1. Right click the taskbar and open Windows Ink Workspace.
2. Enable the One Finger Swipe option.
3. When you swipe with the pen across the screen, a screenshot will be taken.

Note that this feature may not be available on all Surface /Pro /3 units, so it's best to test it before relying on it.

Using the Windows Game Bar

Windows Game Bar is primarily for recording gameplay, but it can also capture screenshots. It's especially handy

when you’re working on a full screen application.

1. Press Windows /+ /G to open the Game Bar.
2. Click the Capture button or press Windows /+ /Alt /+ /PrtScn.
3. The screenshot will be saved to Videos /!’ /Captures.

Game Bar also allows you to record short video clips, making it a versatile tool for documentation.

Using the Windows Mobility Center

The Windows Mobility Center offers a quick way to toggle display settings, but it also includes a screenshot feature on some Surface devices.

1. Press Windows /+ /X and select Mobility Center.
2. Look for the Take a screenshot button.
3. Click it to capture the screen and save it to the default location.

This method is less commonly used but can be handy if you prefer a GUI approach.

Using Third Party Screenshot Tools

When you need advanced features such as delayed capture, scrolling window capture, or automatic uploads, third party applications can be invaluable. Some popular options include:

- Greenshot – Lightweight, open source, and highly customizable.
- ShareX – Advanced features, including auto upload to cloud services.
- Snagit – Professional grade tool with extensive annotation and editing capabilities.
- Lightshot – Simple interface, quick sharing, and cloud storage.

All of these programs support the Surface Pro 3 and can be configured to use the same keyboard shortcuts as the built in Windows tools.

Troubleshooting Common Issues

Even though screenshotting is a basic feature, users sometimes encounter problems. Below are common issues and how to resolve them.

Print /Screen Doesn’t Work After a Keyboard Driver Update

If the Print Screen key suddenly stops capturing the screen, the problem could be a driver conflict. Try the following steps:

1. Open Device Manager (search for it in the Start menu).
2. Expand the Keyboards section.
3. Right click the Surface keyboard and choose Update driver.
4. Select Search automatically for drivers and follow the prompts.
5. Restart your Surface /Pro /3.

After the restart, test the Print /Screen key again.

Snip & Sketch Toolbar Doesn’t Appear

Sometimes the **Windows /+ /Shift /+ /S** shortcut fails to bring up the toolbar. This can happen if the Snip & Sketch app is disabled or corrupted.

1. Open the Settings app.
2. Navigate to Apps /!’ /Apps & features.

3. Find Snip & Sketch and click Advanced options.
4. Click Reset to reinstall the app.
5. Try the shortcut again.

Screenshots Are Not Saved to the Pictures Folder

If the Windows /+ /PrtScn shortcut is not saving files to *Pictures /!' /Screenshots*, it may be due to a missing folder or permissions issue.

1. Navigate to Pictures in File Explorer.
2. Check if a folder named Screenshots exists. If not, create it.
3. Right click the folder, select Properties, then Security.
4. Ensure your user account has Full control permissions.
5. Test the shortcut again.

Print /Screen Captures a Blank Image

Occasionally, the screenshot might appear blank or contain only the taskbar. This can happen if another application interferes with the clipboard.

1. Close any applications that might be capturing the screen (e.g., video players, screen recorders).
2. Restart your Surface /Pro /3.
3. Try the Print /Screen key again.

Best Practices for Capturing Screenshots

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