SOFTWARE & TECH

Print Screen On Surface Pro 3 Keyboard

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Mastering the Print Screen on Surface Pro 3 Keyboard: A Complete Guide

The Microsoft Surface Pro 3 remains a beloved hybrid device among professionals, students, and creatives, offering the power of a laptop with the portability of a tablet. One of the most common tasks users need to perform is capturing screenshots, whether for work documentation, tutorials, preserving memories, or troubleshooting. However, if you are using a Surface Pro 3 with its Type Cover keyboard, you may have noticed that the traditional "PrtScn" (Print Screen) key is not labeled in the same way as on a standard desktop keyboard. This can lead to confusion, especially for new users or those switching from a conventional laptop. In this comprehensive guide, we will explore everything you need to know about using the Print Screen function on a Surface Pro 3 keyboard. We will cover the default shortcuts, alternative methods, troubleshooting tips, and best practices to help you capture screenshots effortlessly.

Understanding how to **Print Screen on Surface Pro 3 keyboard**is essential for maximizing your productivity. Whether you need to capture the entire screen, a specific window, or a custom region, the Surface Pro 3 offers several built-in options that work seamlessly with the Type Cover. Let us dive into the details.

Why Is the Print Screen Key Different on the Surface Pro 3 Keyboard?

The Surface Pro 3 keyboard, often called the Type Cover, is a thin, magnetic keyboard that attaches to the tablet. Because of its compact design, Microsoft had to reduce the number of physical keys. The traditional row of function keys (F1–F12) is present, but the dedicated Print Screen key found on most full-sized keyboards is absent. Instead, the Surface Pro 3 relies on key combinations that use the **Fn key**(Function key) located at the bottom left of the Type Cover. By pressing Fn + the Spacebar or by using other shortcuts, you can invoke the Print Screen command. This design maximizes space while retaining all necessary functionalities.

Many users initially struggle with this change, but once you learn the correct keystrokes, it becomes second nature. The Surface Pro 3 also supports touch-based and stylus-based screenshot methods, giving you flexibility beyond just keyboard shortcuts.

The Primary Keyboard Shortcut: Fn + Spacebar

The easiest and most direct way to perform a **Print Screen on Surface Pro 3 keyboard** is by pressing the **Fn key** (located at the bottom-left corner) and the **Spacebar**simultaneously. This combination works exactly like the traditional Print Screen key on a PC: it copies an image of your entire screen to the clipboard. You can then paste the screenshot into an image editor (like Paint) or a document by pressing Ctrl + V.

However, there is a nuance: on the Surface Pro 3 Type Cover, the Fn key is on the left, next to the Ctrl key. The spacebar is large and easy to hit. This combination is consistent across many Surface models, but newer Type Covers (like those for Surface Pro 4 and later) have a dedicated PrtScn key. For Surface Pro 3, Fn + Spacebar is the default. Some users report that this shortcut might not work for them if they have not installed the latest Surface drivers or if the keyboard is not properly connected. We will address troubleshooting later.

Windows logo key + Fn + Spacebar combination (instead of clipboard), you can use the Windows logo key + Fn + Spacebar combination (instead of clipboard), you can use the screenshots folder inside Pictures. This is a very useful trick for users who need to capture multiple screenshots quickly. However, note that this three-key combination requires careful finger placement.

Alternative Keyboard Shortcuts for Specific Screenshots

Beyond the basic full-screen capture, the Surface Pro 3 keyboard supports several other screenshot shortcuts that use the Windows operating system's built-in tools.

- Alt + Fn + Spacebar: This captures only the currently active window and copies it to the clipboard. For example, if you have a browser window open, pressing Alt + Fn + Spacebar will take a screenshot of that browser window only, ignoring the taskbar and other windows. This is great for isolating specific applications.
- Windows + Shift + S: This combination opens the Snip & Sketch tool (on Windows 10 and 11) or the earlier Snipping Tool. It allows you to capture a rectangular, freeform, window, or full-screen snip. After capturing, the image is copied to the clipboard and a notification appears to edit or save. Note that this shortcut does not require the Fn key—it uses the Windows key, which is on the bottom row of the Type Cover.
- Windows + Fn + Spacebar: As mentioned, this saves a full-screen screenshot directly to your Pictures > Screenshots folder without needing to paste.

Mastering these combinations gives you a complete toolkit for any screenshot scenario. The key is to remember the function of the Fn key in relation to the spacebar. If you are a power user, you can also remap keys using third-party software, but that is beyond the scope of this article.

Using the Surface Pen for Screenshots

One of the unique features of the Surface Pro 3 is its support for the Surface Pen (sold separately). You can use the pen to take screenshots without touching the keyboard at all. By pressing the top (eraser) button on the Surface Pen twice quickly, Windows captures a screenshot of the entire screen and opens a note-taking app (usually OneNote) where you can annotate, crop, and save the image. This method is incredibly intuitive when you are using the device in tablet mode and do not have the Type Cover attached. It provides a natural alternative to the **Print Screen on Surface Pro 3 keyboard** shortcut.

To configure the pen's top button behavior, go to Settings > Devices > Pen & Windows Ink. You can set it to take a screenshot, open Snip & Sketch, or launch other apps. This flexibility makes the Surface Pro 3 a versatile tool for note-takers and designers.

Touch-Based Screenshot Methods

If you are using the Surface Pro 3 as a tablet without the keyboard, you can still capture screenshots using touch gestures. Press and hold the **Windows logo button** on the tablet bezel (the physical button on the screen frame) and simultaneously press the **Volume Down button**(located on the top edge). This combination takes a screenshot of the entire screen and saves it directly to the Screenshots folder. This method mimics the standard smartphone screenshot gesture and works even when the Type Cover is disconnected. It is a reliable alternative when you do not have access to the keyboard or pen.

Troubleshooting Common Issues with Print Screen on Surface Pro 3 Keyboard

It is not uncommon to encounter problems when trying to use the Print Screen function on a Surface Pro 3 keyboard. Here are the most frequent issues and their solutions:

1. Fn + Spacebar does nothing: Make sure your Surface Pro 3 has all the latest Windows updates and Surface drivers installed. Go to Settings > Update & Security > Windows Update and check for updates. Also, try reconnecting the Type Cover by detaching it and snapping it back on. Sometimes the connection can be loose. If the issue persists, test the keyboard in BIOS to rule out hardware failure.
2. Only the spacebar registers, not Fn: The Fn key on Surface Type Covers can sometimes be toggled by accident. On some models, pressing Fn + Caps Lock locks the Fn key into a state where function keys activate

instead of media keys. Unlock it by pressing Fn + Caps Lock again. There is no dedicated Fn Lock key on the Surface Pro 3 keyboard, but the toggle behavior can cause confusion.

3. Windows key shortcuts not working: If Windows + Shift + S does not open Snip & Sketch, ensure that the tool is enabled. Go to Settings > Ease of Access > Keyboard and turn on "Use the Print Screen key to open screen snipping". This setting might override the Fn + Spacebar behavior.
4. Screenshot saved as black image: This glitch can happen with certain display drivers or when using hardware acceleration in apps. Try updating your graphics driver or disabling hardware acceleration in the specific app.
5. Keyboard not responding at all: If your Type Cover stops working entirely, clean the connector pins with a soft, dry cloth. Restart the Surface device. If the problem remains, the keyboard may need replacement.

Most of these issues have straightforward fixes. A quick search in the Microsoft community forums will also yield additional solutions from other Surface Pro 3 users.

Comparing Methods: Which One Should You Use?

The best method for taking a **Print Screen on Surface Pro 3 keyboard**depends on your workflow and whether the keyboard is attached. Here is a quick comparison:

- Fn + Spacebar: Best for full-screen captures when the keyboard is attached and you want to paste into an app.
- Windows + Shift + S: Best for capturing custom regions and immediate annotation (requires Windows 10/11).
- Alt + Fn + Spacebar: Best for capturing only the active window.
- Double-click Surface Pen top button: Best for quick note-taking and annotation in tablet mode.
- Windows + Volume Down: Best when the keyboard is detached and you want a simple save-to-file.

For power users, Surface Pro 3 also supports the Xbox Game Bar (Windows + G) which includes a screenshot function, but that is more suited for gaming or app recordings.

Creative Uses for Screenshots on Surface Pro 3

Once you master the **Print Screen on Surface Pro 3 keyboard**, you can incorporate screenshots into your daily productivity. For example:

- Creating tutorials: Capture step-by-step instructions using Snip & Sketch to annotate and mark up images.
- Work collaboration: Share error messages or design mockups with colleagues quickly.
- Academic research: Save snippets from online articles directly to OneNote using the Surface Pen double-click shortcut.
- Personal records: Keep digital receipts, boarding passes, or important messages by snapping them to your cloud storage.

The Surface Pro 3's flexibility in screenshot methods means you are never stuck without a way to capture what you see. Whether you are in laptop mode or tablet mode, a combination exists to suit your situation.

Conclusion

Understanding how to **Print Screen on Surface Pro 3 keyboard**is a small but significant skill that enhances your productivity and efficiency. While the Type Cover lacks a dedicated PrtScn key, the alternative shortcuts using the Fn key and the spacebar are easy to learn and remember. Additionally, the Surface Pen and touch gestures provide redundant methods, ensuring you can always capture a screenshot regardless of how you are using the device. By familiarizing yourself with Fn + Spacebar, Alt + Fn + Spacebar, Windows + Shift + S, and the pen button, you can handle any screenshot task with confidence. If you encounter issues, a few simple troubleshooting steps—like updating drivers or checking keyboard connections—will usually resolve them. The Surface Pro 3 remains a powerful tool, and mastering its screenshot capabilities is just one more way to unlock

its full potential in your daily workflow.

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