The A to Z Guide of Keyboard Shortcuts in Microsoft Excel – Detailed Version

For those of you that like to save time when using Microsoft Excel, the Ctrl button, used in conjunction with other buttons on the keyboard, gives you shortcut access to a range of different functions.

If you use these functions regularly in your spreadsheet craft, these shortcuts will save you a great deal of time and will eventually become an automatic tool for you.

Shortcut List

Ctrl + A (Select All)

Ctrl + B (Bold Font)

Ctrl + C (Copy Selection)

Ctrl + D (Fill Down)

Ctrl + E (Enable Flash Fill)

Ctrl + F (Find)

Ctrl + G (Go To)

Ctrl + H (Find & Replace)

Ctrl + I (Italic Font)

Ctrl + J (No Function)

Ctrl + K (Insert Hyperlink)

Ctrl + L (Insert Table)

Ctrl + M (No Function)

Ctrl + N (New Workbook)

Ctrl + O (Open Workbook)

Ctrl + P (Print)

Ctrl + Q (Quick Analysis Options)

Ctrl + R (Fill Right)

Ctrl + S (Save)

Ctrl + T (Insert Table)

Ctrl + U (Underline Font)

Ctrl + V (Paste Selection)

Ctrl + W (Close Workbook)

Ctrl + X (Cut Selection)

Ctrl + Y (Redo)

Ctrl + Z (Undo)

Ctrl + Plus (+) (Insert Cell/Row/Column)

Ctrl + Minus (-) (Delete Cell/Row/Column)

Ctrl + A – Select All

This shortcut works in two ways:

Firstly, if you have a cell selected that is adjacent (next to) a set of values, using Ctrl + A will select the range of values only. If you want the whole worksheet selected, simply use Ctrl + A for a second time and all of the worksheets cells will be selected.

If you have a cell selected that is not adjacent (next to) a set of values, using Ctrl + A once will select the entire worksheet.

Ctrl + B – Bold Font

Using Ctrl + B will apply/unapply the **Bold Font** to the selected cells. Therefore, repeatedly using Ctrl + B will switch between Bold and Non-Bold Font for the selected cells.

Ctrl + C – Copy Selection

This shortcut will Copy the selected cells to the Clipboard (which you can think of as a virtual scratchpad), allowing you to paste them into a different location (using Ctrl + V). At this point, you will be able to see a dotted lined moving around the selected cells.

It will also allow you to access the 'Paste Special' options from the Right-Click menu or by pressing Ctrl + Alt + V.

After using Ctrl + C, if you no longer wish to copy the selected cells, press the Esc key and the Copy request will be cancelled.

Ctrl + D – Fill Down

Ctrl + D actions the Fill Down command. This allows you to fill the selected cells below with the uppermost selected value/formula, as illustrated by the images below.

Before: The uppermost cell in the selection above has a formula which multiplies the value in the cell to the left by 10. The selection has been made down to the bottom of the values in column B.

After: By using Ctrl + D, the formula in the uppermost cell has been 'filled' down to the bottom of the selection, hence all of the values to the left have been multiplied by 10. This also works for values, dates and pretty much any other data type.

Ctrl + E – Enable Flash Fill (Excel 2013 Onwards)

The Ctrl + E command relates to the Flash Fill function, which was introduced to Excel 2013.

It basically recognises patterns when inputting data and suggests fill options (to save you having to type in all of the remaining data).

To illustrate this, the example below should give you an idea:

We have a list of names but we want to separate out the first name. There is another way to do this in previous versions of Excel, so don't worry if you have 2010 or prior.

Excel recognises that we are typing First Names into the 'First Name' column, based on the 'Name' column and will offer to automatically complete the list, as soon as B (for Bob) is entered into the second cell down (automatically adding Bob and Fred).

Name	First Name
John Smith	John
Bob Jones	B
Fred Brown	

Ctrl + F – Find

Ctrl + F allows you to find a value within a worksheet (and workbook if you go for the advanced functions).

If multiple cells are selected, the Find function will only search within the selected cells. However, if only 1 cell is selected, the Find function will search the entire worksheet.

In the example below, we search for the number 6.
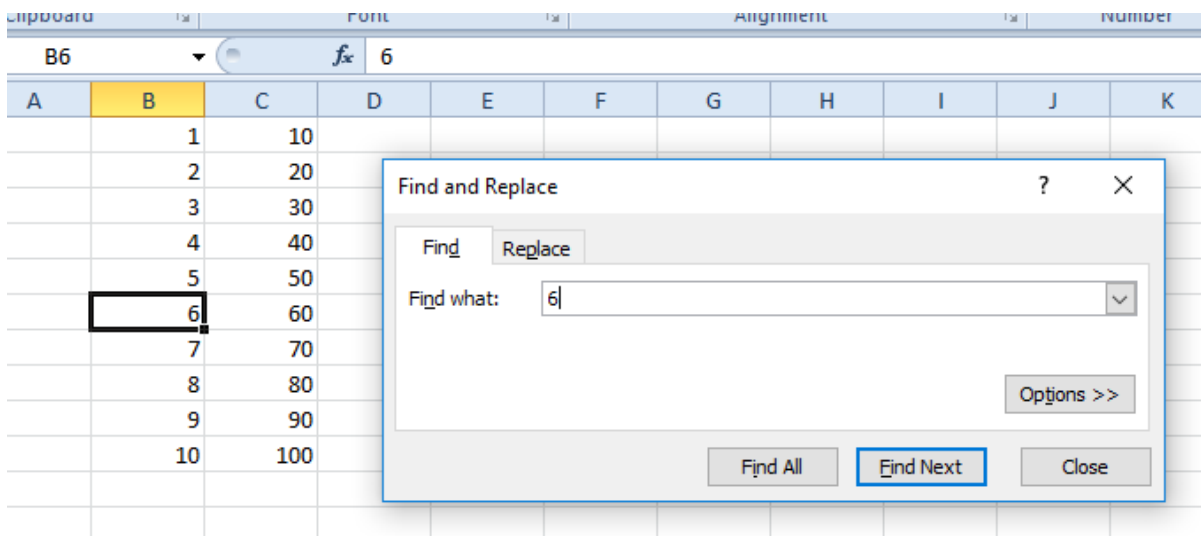
After pressing Ctrl + F, the 'Find & Replace' window will open. Type the value that you are looking for into the 'Find What' box and click on 'Find Next' (or press return).

Excel will then select the first instance of the value '6'. If this is the value you're looking for, then great. If it isn't, click on the 'Find Next' button again (or press return) to keep searching the worksheet for the value '6'. The next value found would be '60', as it contains a 6.

If the value that you are looking for isn't found within the worksheet, you will get the following message:
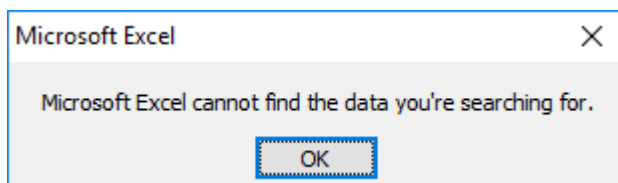
Ctrl + G – Go To

Ctrl + G activates the 'Go To' command. This lets you search for a particular Cell Reference i.e. 'B10' in the example below. It also lets you search for Named Cells i.e. 'Bananas'.

In the example below, we have searched for the named cell 'Bananas' by typing it into the 'Reference' box (Notice that previous searches appear in the 'Go To' window). Upon clicking 'OK' (or hitting the Enter button), Excel has taken us to the cell with that name, as can be seen in the top left hand corner of the image.
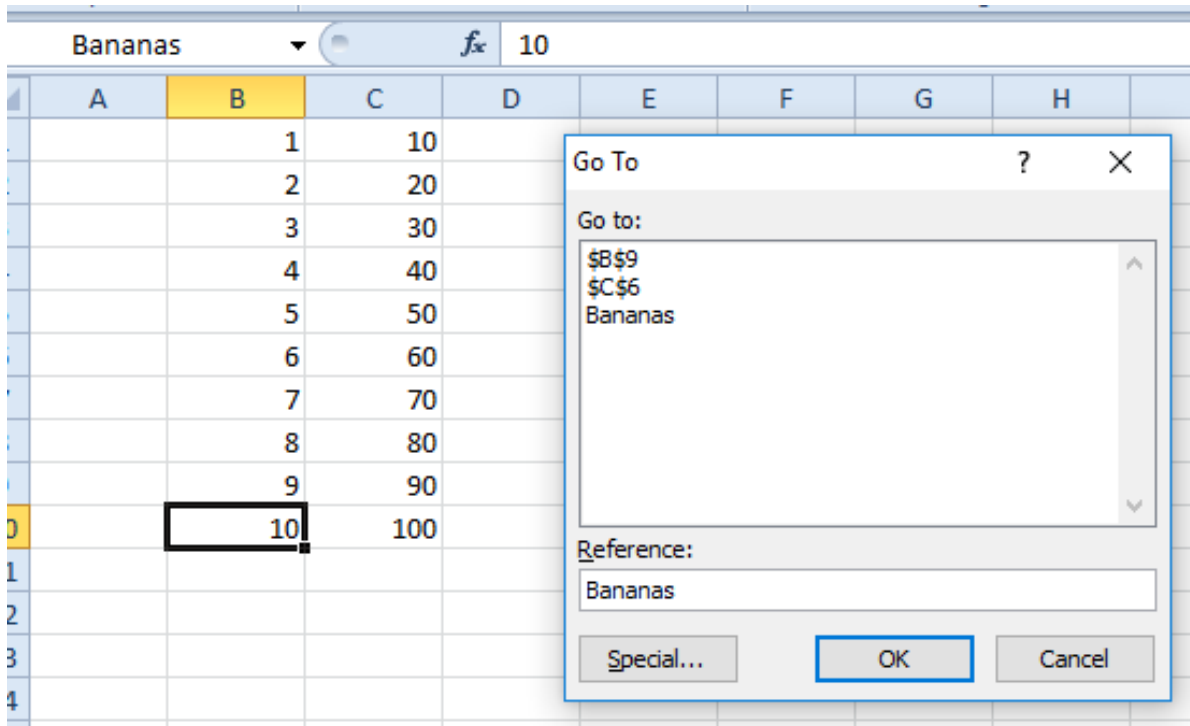
Ctrl + H – Find & Replace

The Ctrl + H function again brings up the 'Find & Replace' window but this time, the 'Replace' tab is selected.

This function allows to you search for existing values and replace them with another.

In the example below, an employee called John has been replaced with an employee called George, therefore we wish to replace every instance of the work John with George's name on the Duties list.
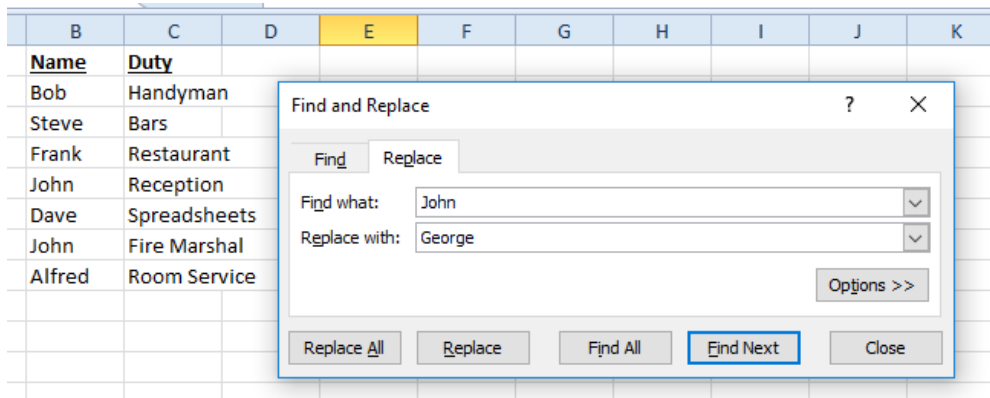
Therefore, we press Ctrl + H, type 'John' into the 'Find What' box and then type 'George' into the 'Replace With' box.

If you wish to replace the values one at a time, click on the 'Replace' button. If you wish to replace the values all at once, click on the 'Replace All' button.

The results are shown below:
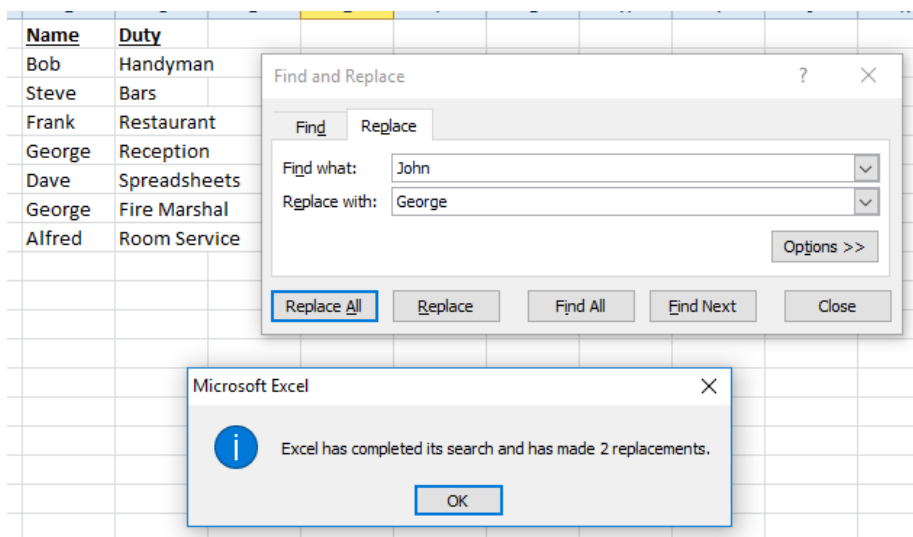
Ctrl + I – Italic Font

Using Ctrl + I will apply/unapply the *Italic Font* to the selected cells. Therefore, repeatedly using Ctrl + I will switch between *Italic* and Non-Italic Font for the selected cells.

Ctrl + J – No Function

As the title suggests, there is no function for the Ctrl + J command.

Ctrl + K – Insert Hyperlink

The Ctrl + K function is handy if you wish to Hyperlink a cell to a webpage, a location within the current worksheet/workbook or even link to another document.

With the cell selected that you wish to insert the hyperlink into, press Ctrl + K to access the 'Insert Hyperlink' window.

In the example below, we wish to insert a Hyperlink to our favourite website.

In the 'Text to Display' box, type the link name, as you wish to see it in your spreadsheet (this doesn't have to be the same as the web address).

In the 'Address' box, type the web address of the webpage that you wish to link to.
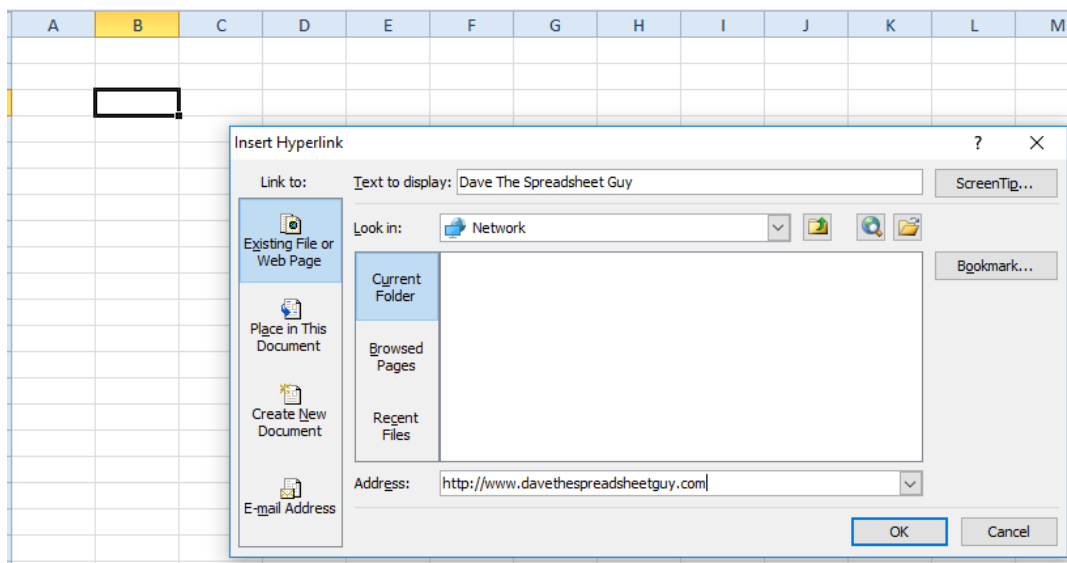
Once you have done this, click 'OK' and the Hyperlink will be inserted into the selected cell, as shown below. This then takes the user to the webpage when they click on the cell.
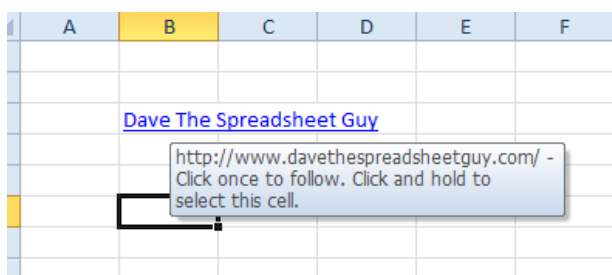
You would have noticed the other hyperlink options from the first image, so feel free to play around with these at your leisure.

Ctrl + L – Create Table

The Ctrl + L command turns a selection of data into a table, with benefits including filtering and sorting with ease, formatting appearance quickly and simplified data entry, to name a few.

To do this, select the data/list that you wish to turn into a table and then use Ctrl + L (or Ctrl + T), as per the images below:

Before:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1										
2			Jan	Feb	Mar					
3		Apples	10	15	20					
4		Oranges	20	25	30					
5		Bananas	30	35	40					
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										

Create Table   ?   ✕

Where is the data for your table?

=$B$2:$E$5

☑ My table has headers

OK   Cancel

After:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1										
2		Column1 ▼	Jan ▼	Feb ▼	Mar ▼					
3		Apples	10	15	20					
4		Oranges	20	25	30					
5		Bananas	30	35	40					
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										
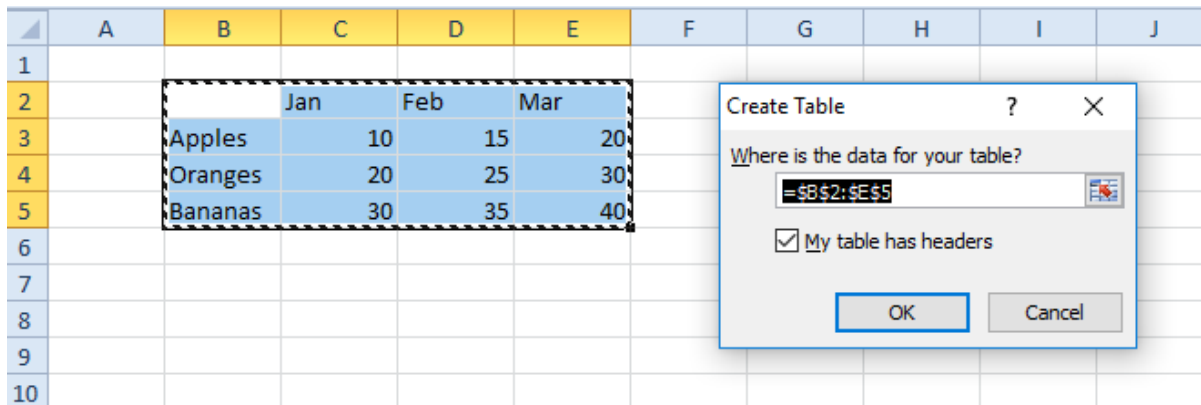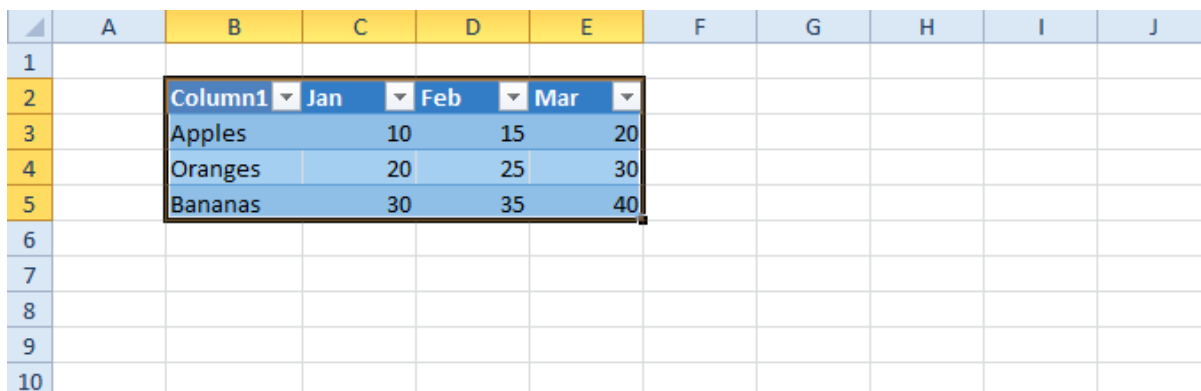
Ctrl + M – No Function

As the title suggests, there is no function for the Ctrl + M command.

Ctrl + N – New Workbook

The Ctrl + N command creates a New Workbook, saving you the need to go through the File menu (although this can also be accessed through the Quick Access Toolbar).

Ctrl + O – Open Workbook

The Ctrl + O command takes you to the Open Workbook window, where you can choose an existing Microsoft Excel workbook to open. Again, this saves you the need to go through the File menu (although this can also be accessed through the Quick Access Toolbar).

Ctrl + P – Print

The Ctrl + P command brings up the 'Print' window, where you can select your print options i.e. destination printer, number of copies, paper size etc etc. Yet again, this saves you the need to go through the File menu (although this can also be accessed through the Quick Access Toolbar).

Ctrl + Q – Quick Analysis Options (Excel 2013 Onwards).

The Ctrl + Q command opens the 'Quick Analysis' window. First up, select your data that you want to analyse and then you should see the quick analysis button in the bottom right corner of the selection.
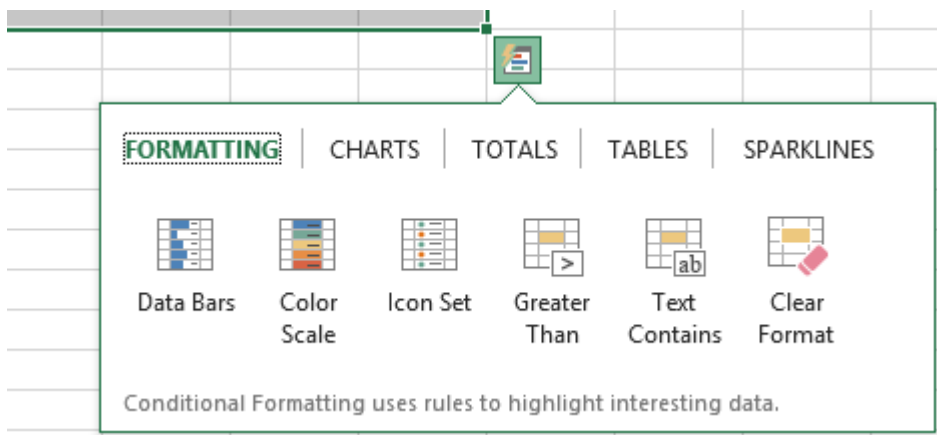
There are some great, powerful and customisable analysis tools here to help with formatting, charting, totals, tables and sparklines, as per the menu headings shown above. Have a play around with your data to see how easy it is to create powerful analysis relatively quickly.

Ctrl + R – Fill Right

Ctrl + R actions the Fill Right command. This allows you to fill the selected cells across with the leftmost selected value/formula, as illustrated by the images below.

Before: The leftmost cell in the selection above has a formula which multiplies the value in the cell above by 10. The selection has been made across to the right of the values in Row 1.

After: By using Ctrl + R, the formula in the leftmost cell has been 'filled' across to the right of the selection, hence all of the values above have been multiplied by 10. This also works for values, dates and pretty much any other data type.

Ctrl + S – Save Workbook

The Ctrl + S command Saves the current workbook. If the document has not been previously saved (if you started a new workbook from scratch) then the 'Save As' window is opened, which will allow you to choose a save location, name the workbook and select the type of workbook that you wish to use.

Again, this saves you the need to go through the File menu (although this can also be accessed through the Quick Access Toolbar).

Ctrl + T – Create Table

See Ctrl + L, as this is exactly the same function.

Ctrl + U – Underline Font

Using Ctrl + U will apply/unapply the Underline Font to the selected cells. Therefore, repeatedly using Ctrl + U will switch between Underlined and Non-Underlined Font for the selected cells.

As a bonus, the Underline button on the Home Ribbon also has a dropdown, where you can also select Double Underline Font. However, the Ctrl + U shortcut cannot do this.

Ctrl + V – Paste Clipboard

The Ctrl + V command pastes the contents of the Clipboard (mentioned in Ctrl + C above) into the selected area.

If there is nothing on the clipboard (nothing has been cut or copied) then nothing will happen when pressing Ctrl + V.

Also, it is worth noting that Ctrl + V does not cover the functions offered by the 'Paste Special' function, however this is covered by Ctrl + Alt + V.

Ctrl + W – Close Workbook

The Ctrl + W command closes the current Workbook. This saves the need to click on the small 'X' in the top right hand corner of the window.

If you have saved the Workbook immediately beforehand, the Workbook will close straight away. However, if you have made changes to the Workbook since your last save, you will be prompted by Excel to save the changes that you have made, so as to protect you from losing any work that you have done.

Ctrl + X – Cut Selection

This shortcut will Cut the selected cells to the Clipboard (which you can think of as a virtual scratchpad), allowing you to paste them into a different location (using Ctrl + V). At this point, you will be able to see a dotted lined moving around the selected cells.

The two main differences between this function and the Ctrl + C function are that:

1. When Pasting, Cut will remove the contents from the Cut Selection, therefore 'moving' the contents. Copy will make a duplicate of the Copy Selection, leaving the original selection where it is.
2. The Paste Special function is not available for Cut. It is only available for Copy.

Similarly to the Ctrl + C command, if you no longer wish to cut the selected cells, press the Esc key and the Cut request will be cancelled.

Ctrl + Y – Redo

The Ctrl + Y command is the opposite of the Undo command (see below). If you have used Undo too many times, the Redo function will take you forward a step, one step per press.

Ctrl + Z – Undo

The Ctrl + Z command is the shortcut for the Undo function. This function is like an eraser, if you make a mistake/try something that doesn't work. The Undo function will take you backwards one step i.e. if your last step was to Underline the font in a cell, pressing Ctrl + Z will remove the Underline from the font in that cell.

Ctrl + Plus (+) – Insert Cell/Row/Column

The Ctrl + Plus (+) command is the shortcut for 'Insert', relating to cells, rows and columns.

Let's first look at this for inserting cells/**rows**:

Simply click the cell or row which you want to shift downwards (to accommodate the new cell/row). Then press Ctrl + Plus (+) to insert a cell or row above the selection. Repeat Ctrl + Plus (+) if you wish to insert multiple cells/rows. Also, the more cells/rows you select, the more cells/rows will be inserted, as per the images below:

Before:

After:

After x 2:

Before (2 rows selected):

After (2 rows selected):

The same works for inserting cells/**columns**:

Simply click the cell or column which you want to shift to the right (to accommodate the new cell/column). Then press Ctrl + Plus (+) to insert a cell or column to the left of the selection. Repeat Ctrl + Plus (+) if you wish to insert multiple cells/columns. Also, the more cells/columns you select, the more cells/columns will be inserted, as per the images below:

Before:

After:

After x 2:

Before (2 columns selected):

After (2 columns selected):

Ctrl + Minus (-) – Delete Cell/Row/Column

The Ctrl + Minus (-) command is the shortcut for 'Delete', relating to cells, rows and columns.

Let's first look at this for deleting cells/**rows**:

Simply click the cell or row which you want to delete. Then press Ctrl + Minus (-) to delete a cell or row. Repeat Ctrl + Minus (-) if you wish to delete multiple cells/rows. Also, the more cells/rows you select, the more cells/rows will be deleted, as per the images below:

Before:

After:

After x 2:

Before (2 rows selected):

After (2 rows selected):

The same works for deleting cells/**columns**:

Simply click the cell or column which you want to delete. Then press Ctrl + Minus (-) to delete a cell or column. Repeat Ctrl + Minus (-) if you wish to delete multiple cells/columns. Also, the more cells/columns you select, the more cells/columns will be deleted, as per the images below:

Before:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
1		1	2	3	4	5			6	7	8	9	10		
2		10	20	30	40	50			60	70	80	90	100		
3															
4															

After:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
1		1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10			
2		10	20	30	40	50		60	70	80	90	100			
3															
4															

After x 2:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
1		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				
2		10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100				
3															
4															

Before (2 columns selected):

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
1		1	2	3	4	5			6	7	8	9	10		
2		10	20	30	40	50			60	70	80	90	100		
3															
4															

After (2 columns selected):

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
1		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10				
2		10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100				
3															
4															