GENERAL

print screen on surface pro 3

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Introduction

When you're working on a **Surface Pro 3**, capturing your screen can be as essential as typing a document or taking notes. Whether you're troubleshooting, creating tutorials, or simply sharing a visual moment with a colleague, knowing how to take a screenshot on this versatile tablet is a must skill. In this guide, we'll walk through every method you can use to print screen on Surface Pro 3, from the classic keyboard shortcut to the built in Snip & Sketch tool, and even third party solutions. By the end, you'll have a toolbox of techniques that fit any workflow, whether you're a student, a professional, or a casual user.

Why Screenshotting Matters on the Surface Pro 3

The Surface Pro 3 is a powerful hybrid device that blends laptop functionality with tablet convenience. Its high resolution PixelSense display and detachable keyboard make it a favorite for creative professionals, educators, and business users alike. Capturing your screen can help you:

- Document software glitches or bugs for support teams.
- Create step by step guides or tutorials.
- Save a visual reference of a design or layout.
- Share a quick snapshot with a teammate or friend.

Because the device runs Windows 10, it inherits a suite of screenshot tools that are easy to access once you know the right commands.

Method 1: The Classic Print Screen Key

Using the Full Screen Capture

On many Windows laptops, the **Print Screen**button captures the entire screen and copies it to the clipboard. The Surface Pro 3's keyboard layout follows the same convention, but there are a few nuances to keep in mind.

1. Locate the PrtScn key on the top row of the keyboard.
2. Press it once. The screen will flash briefly, indicating a successful capture.
3. Open an image editor such as Paint, Word, or PowerPoint.
4. Paste the screenshot with Ctrl + V or by right clicking and selecting Paste.
5. Save the file in your preferred format (PNG, JPEG, etc.).

This method is ideal for quick captures, but it does not allow you to select a portion of the screen or add annotations directly.

Capturing Only the Active Window

If you want to capture just the window you're working in, add the **Alt** key to the mix:

1. Click the window you wish to capture to make it active.
2. Press Alt + PrtScn.
3. Paste the image into an editor as described above.

This shortcut is especially handy when you're juggling multiple applications and want to isolate a specific interface.

Method 2: Using Windows 10's Built In Screenshot Tools

Snip & Sketch

Windows 10 introduced the **Snip & Sketch** app, which offers more flexibility than the old Snipping Tool. It supports free form snips, rectangular selections, window snips, and full screen captures. Here's how to use it on a Surface Pro 3:

1. Press Windows + Shift + S. The screen will dim and a small toolbar will appear at the top.
2. Choose the snip type: rectangular, free form, window, or full screen.
3. Select the area you want to capture. The image is automatically copied to the clipboard.
4. Click the notification that appears to open the snip in the Snip & Sketch editor.
5. Annotate, crop, or add a caption.
6. Save or share the image directly from the app.

Because Snip & Sketch saves images in the clipboard and offers editing tools, it's a great choice for quick, annotated screenshots.

Snipping Tool (Legacy)

For users who prefer the classic tool, the **Snipping Tool** remains available in Windows 10. It offers similar functionality but with a slightly different interface.

1. Search for "Snipping Tool" in the Start menu and open it.
2. Click New and select the snip shape.
3. Draw the snip area on the screen.
4. Save the snip in your desired format.

While the Snipping Tool is no longer actively updated, it still works well for basic screenshotting on the Surface Pro 3.

Method 3: Using the Surface Pen and Touchscreen

One of the unique features of the Surface Pro 3 is its support for the Surface Pen. You can use the pen to capture screenshots directly, which is especially useful for drawing or annotating on the fly.

1. Press the Windows + Shift + S shortcut as usual.
2. Instead of using the mouse, draw your snip area with the Surface Pen.
3. After the snip is captured, the image appears in the clipboard.
4. Open an editor or the Snip & Sketch app to view and edit the screenshot.

Because the pen works with the touchscreen, you can create custom shapes or free form snips that are harder to achieve with a mouse.

Method 4: Using the Action Center for Quick Capture

The Surface Pro 3's Action Center provides quick access to several system utilities, including screenshot options.

1. Swipe from the right edge of the screen or press Windows + A to open the Action Center.
2. Look for the Screenshot tile (sometimes labeled "Screen Capture").
3. Click the tile, then choose the type of capture you want.
4. Follow the same steps as with Snip & Sketch to edit and save your image.

This method is convenient if you're already using the Action Center for notifications or quick settings.

Method 5: Using the Keyboard's "Windows + Volume Down" Shortcut

Some Surface devices support a hardware shortcut that captures the entire screen and saves the image automatically to the **Pictures/Screenshots**folder. While this shortcut is more common on newer Surface models, it can still work on the Surface Pro 3 if the firmware supports it.

1. Press Windows + Volume Down simultaneously.
2. The screen will flash, and the screenshot will be saved automatically.
3. Open File Explorer, navigate to Pictures > Screenshots, and locate your image.

This method eliminates the need to paste the image into an editor, making it fast for quick captures.

Method 6: Using Third Party Screenshot Software

For users who need advanced features such as scrolling window capture, scheduled screenshots, or cloud integration, third party tools can be a worthwhile investment. Some popular options include:

- Greenshot – lightweight, open source, and highly customizable.
- ShareX – offers extensive automation, editing, and sharing options.
- Snagit – a premium solution with advanced editing, video capture, and cloud sharing.

These applications can be downloaded from their official websites. Once installed, they usually integrate seamlessly with the Surface Pro 3's keyboard and touchscreen.

Best Practices for Managing Screenshots on Surface Pro 3

Organize Your Images

Large volumes of screenshots can quickly clutter your storage. Create a dedicated folder structure, such as:

- Pictures/Screenshots/Projects
- Pictures/Screenshots/Support
- Pictures/Screenshots/Personal

Use descriptive file names (e.g., **ProjectX_TutorialStep1.png**) to make retrieval easier.

Compress and Optimize

High resolution screenshots can consume significant disk space. Consider compressing images using tools like **ImageOptim**or online services that reduce file size without compromising quality. If you're sharing screenshots online, uploading them in PNG or JPEG format at 80–90% quality often strikes a good balance.

Use Cloud Backup

Surface Pro 3 users typically have OneDrive integrated. Enable **OneDrive Backup**for the Screenshots folder to keep a cloud copy of every capture. This ensures you never lose an image, even if the device is lost or damaged.

Common Troubleshooting Tips

- Print Screen Key Not Working – Check if the Fn key is enabled or if a function lock is active. Some Surface keyboards require Fn + PrtScn to trigger the command.
- No Screenshot in Clipboard – Make sure you're pressing the correct key combination. If using Windows + Shift + S, the screenshot will only be copied to the clipboard if you actually select an area.

- Snip & Sketch Not Opening – Ensure your Windows 10 is up to date. Snip & Sketch requires certain updates to function properly.
- Automatic Save Not Working – The Windows + Volume Down shortcut may not be supported on older firmware. Check the Surface Pro 3 support page for firmware updates.

When to Choose Each Method

Method	Ideal Use Case	Pros	Cons
Print Screen Key	Quick full screen capture for editing later	Fast, no extra software needed	No selection, requires manual pasting
Alt + Print Screen	Capturing active window only	Specific to window, no extra software	Same limitations as full screen capture
Snip & Sketch	Annotated or partial screen capture	Built in, editing tools, cloud sharing	Requires Windows 10 update
Action Center	Quick capture while managing notifications	Convenient, no keyboard needed	Not available on older OS versions
Windows + Volume Down	Automatic save to folder	Instant, no clipboard needed	Hardware support may vary
Third Party Software	Advanced editing, scheduling, or cloud integration	Feature rich, highly customizable	May require purchase or installation

Conclusion

Mastering screenshot techniques on the Surface Pro 3 can transform how you document, share, and troubleshoot. Whether you rely on the classic Print Screen key, the modern Snip & Sketch app, or a powerful third party utility, the device offers a range of options to suit every need. By following the methods outlined above, you'll capture clear, high quality images with minimal effort, organize them efficiently, and keep them safe in the cloud. So the next time you need to **print screen on surface pro 3**, you'll know exactly which tool to use and how to make the most of it.

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