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Keyboard – Tuning the Response

Many people have difficulty using the standard computer keyboard for a variety of reasons.

Some people find they have held a key down too long and get a string of unwanted characters. Others accidentally press keys on the way to the desired key.

This is because the standard keyboard, as it is normally set up, is very sensitive. This can, however, be easily remedied and you need never get unwanted keystrokes again. This feature is called FilterKeys.

This skillsheet shows you how to tune the response of your keyboard to suit your needs.

FilterKeys includes a number of features designed to work either separately, or in combination, to address problems related to keyboard sensitivity.

This skillsheet is for Windows XP. Similar features are available in other versions of Windows. Please see our website at www.abilitynet.org.uk/myway or consult the Help facility in your version of Windows.

To Turn FilterKeys On

- Using the mouse, Click the **start** button or alternatively you can press the **windows logo** key on your keyboard (or **Ctrl + Esc**).
- Click on **Control Panel** or press the letter **C** on the keyboard.
- Double click on **Accessibility Options** or press the **A** key repeatedly until **Accessibility Options** is highlighted and then press **Enter**. The Accessibility Options properties box should now be displayed and as default this window will display the current keyboard settings. (If you cannot see the accessibility option, you may need to view the Control Panel in Classic view, not category view).



If for any reason your machine does not display this icon, Windows Accessibility has been optionally removed, or not installed. You will need to install it from your original Windows CD ROM. You can consult either the manual, or the Windows Help for details on how to reinstall these options onto your computer.

- If you are not already looking at the Keyboard tab, either click on it or press **Control + Tab** until it is at the front.
- Click the checkbox marked **Use FilterKeys** or alternatively press **Alt + F** on the keyboard which puts a tick in the box.
- Click **OK** or press **Enter** to confirm your choice and exit the Accessibility Options properties.

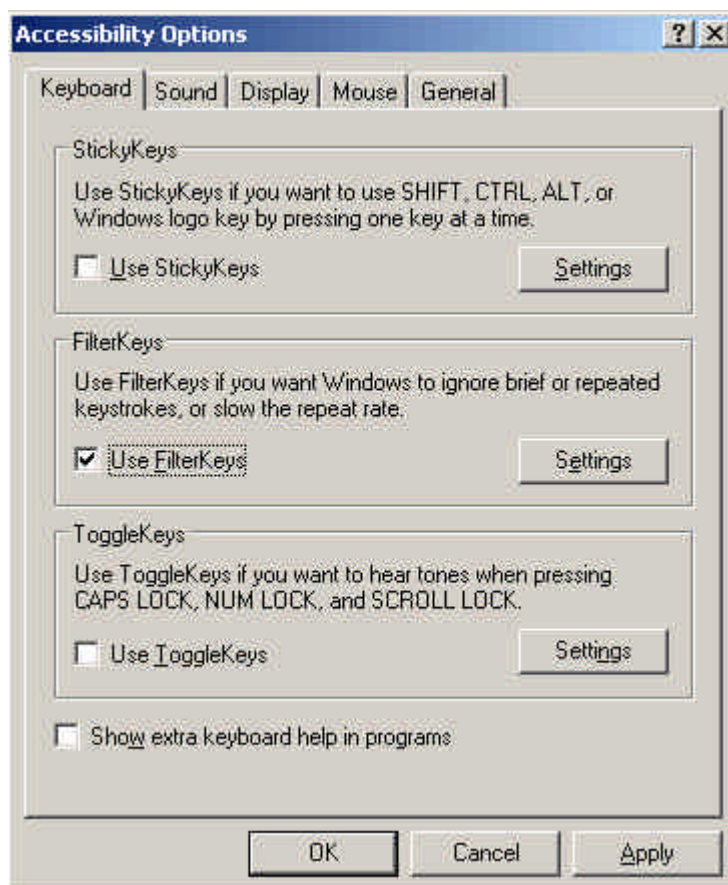


Fig. 1

Adjusting FilterKeys Settings

FilterKeys has a number of settings, which can be adjusted by clicking on **Settings** or pressing **Alt + E** with the keyboard.

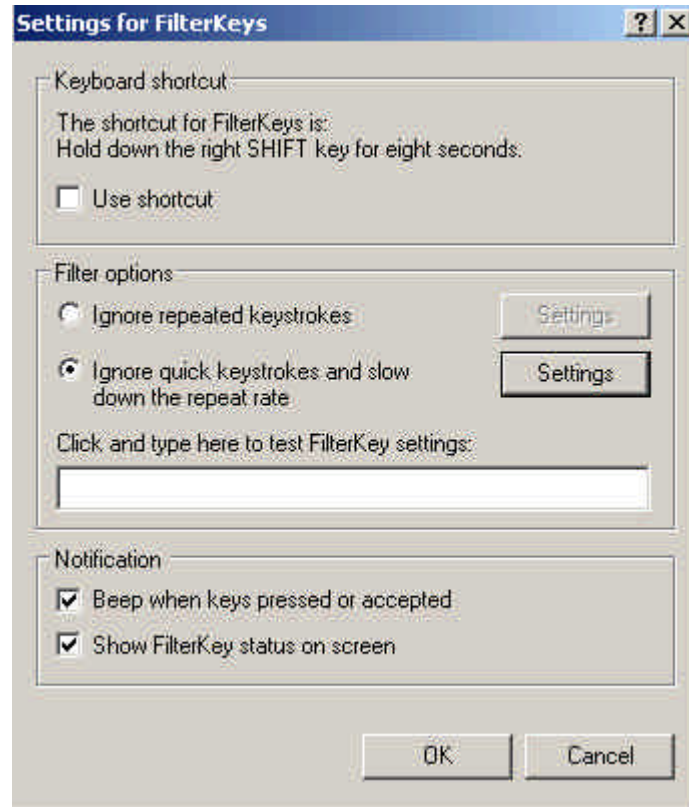


Fig. 2

- If the **Use shortcut** is enabled, FilterKeys can be turned on or off by using a hot key (which is holding down the right SHIFT key for eight seconds).
- Click on **Use Shortcut** or press **Alt + U**
- FilterKeys has two modes. The first is aimed at tuning repeated keystrokes only, whereas the second goes into fine detail as to how the keyboard reacts to the user. At this level you have the option to check any adjustments you may have made within the test area. This provides you with a quick way of ensuring that the changes you have made actually do what you either thought, or want them to do.
- Click in the test area or press **Alt + C** to enter the test area.
- The Notification options within FilterKeys can be very useful. By checking the **Beep when keys pressed or accepted** option, the user is notified upon each selection being entered into the computer. Many users find this reassuring and allows them to concentrate on their input device rather than the screen, as and when they wish.

- Click the **Beep when keys pressed or accepted** check box or press **Alt + B**.
- When the **Show FilterKeys status on screen** option is checked, a small stopwatch will appear in the system tray near your clock.
- Click the **Show FilterKeys status on screen** checkbox or press **Alt + H** (see Fig. 3)



Fig. 3

Advanced Settings for FilterKeys

Filter Options – Ignore repeated keystrokes

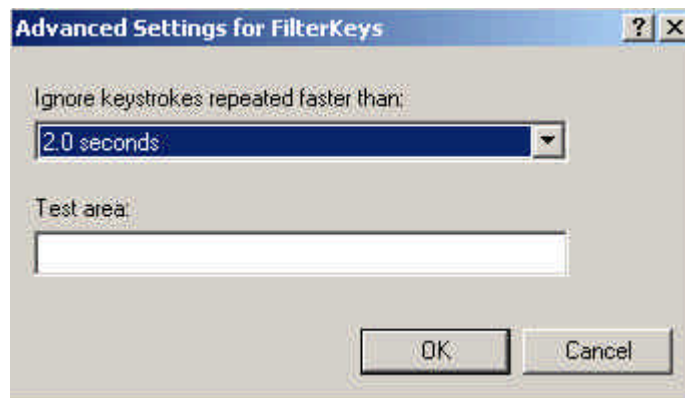


Fig. 4

When you click on **Ignore repeated keystrokes** and then click on **Settings** which is adjacent to it, a separate dialogue box appears (see Fig. 4). From here you can tell the computer to ignore keystrokes repeated faster than a time of your choosing.

- Click the **Ignore repeated keystrokes** checkbox or press **Alt + O**.
- Click the **Settings** button or press **Alt + S** to display the Advanced settings dialog box (see fig. 3)
- Click and drag the slider to the time you want, or press **Alt + I** to select the slider and use the left and right arrow keys to adjust it.
- Click OK or press **Enter** to return to the Filter Keys options.

Filter Options – Ignore quick keystrokes and slow down the repeat rate

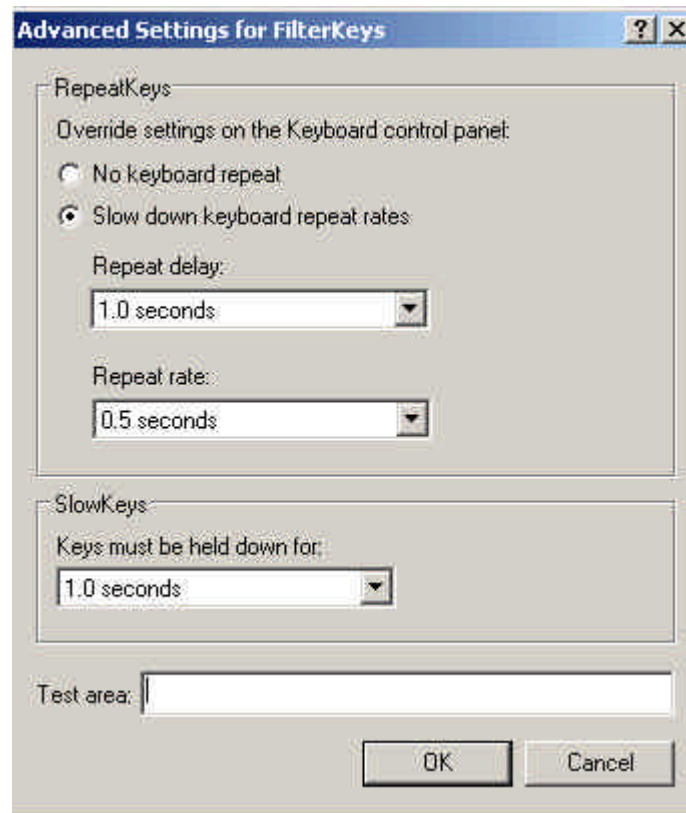


Fig. 4

When you click on **Ignore quick keystrokes and slow down the repeat rate** and then click on **Settings** which is adjacent to it, a separate dialog box appears (see Fig. 4). From here you can tell the computer to ignore keystrokes repeated faster than a time of your choosing.

- Click on the **Ignore quick keystrokes and slow down the repeat rate** checkbox, or press **Alt + N**.
- Click on the adjacent settings button or press **Alt + E**.

From this dialog box you can choose to either switch all keyboard repeating off completely, or customise it to match your own preferences.

Repeat delay and repeat rate are split into two separate options. This enables you to set the length of time you wish the computer to wait before it repeats the keystroke for the first time, differently to those subsequent.

To modify the repeat rate and repeat delay:

- Click the **Slow down keyboard repeat rates** checkbox or press **Alt + S**.
- Click and drag the repeat delay slider to the setting you want or press **Alt + D** to select the repeat delay slider and use the left and right arrow keys to adjust it.

- Click and drag the repeat rate slider to the setting you want or press **Alt + R** to select the repeat rate slider and use the left and right arrow keys to adjust it.

By setting the repeat rate to a higher speed than the repeat delay, the keyboard will accelerate when a key is held beyond the first repeated keystroke. This is important for tasks such as backspacing over an entire word. You would not necessarily wish to wait up to 2 seconds for every single keystroke.

SlowKeys enables you to tune the amount of time the computer waits, whilst you are holding a key down, before it accepts it. This means that you can press hundreds of keys by accident without the computer processing a single one, until it is held down for a specific length of time.

To adjust the setting for slow keys:

- Click and drag the slider below the heading **keys must be held down for**, and drag the slider to the setting you want, or press **Alt + K** to select the slider and use the left and right arrow keys to adjust the slider.

Again, within this dialog box there is a test area, which you can use to test any changes you may have made to the default keyboard settings. Click in the test area or press **Alt + T** to jump to the test area.

When you have finished setting up the advanced options, click **OK** or press **Enter** to return to the Filter Keys dialog box. Click **OK** or press **Enter** again.

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