

New iPad keyboard shortcuts aim to make up for lack of function keys

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- The Magic Keyboard with a 12.9-inch 2020 iPad Pro.
Samuel Axon
- The iPad is suspended in air just above the keyboard.
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- It's also a protective case that looks quite similar to the Smart Keyboard from this angle.
Samuel Axon
- It's a bit thick and heavy.
Samuel Axon
- Here's the keyboard layout, which mirrors the latest MacBook keyboards. It attracts smudges like crazy.
Samuel Axon
- The iPad Pro and 13-inch MacBook Pro Magic Keyboards side by side.
Samuel Axon

Apple may soon add keyboard shortcuts for the iPad that would perform some of the actions Mac and PC users use the function or media keys for, according to 9to5Mac. The claim is based on analysis of code within iPadOS 13.5.5 beta.

When we reviewed the iPad Pro's new Magic Keyboard peripheral,

one of our main complaints was the lack of physical media keys. Some features like managing media playback or changing screen brightness are available in the Control Center, which is a simple swipe away.

But others, like keyboard backlight brightness, have to be changed deep within the Settings app, whereas they could be changed with one or two taps on the MacBook Pro's Touch Bar or the MacBook Air's function keys. The Apple-made keyboard attachments for the various iPad models have no Touch Bar, and they lack function or media keys.

9to5Mac found references to new keyboard shortcuts for these types of tasks, but it was not able to activate them. Apple may be in the early stages of testing this feature, but there's no guarantee it will reach the public. And if it does, it might be in iPadOS 14 (due to be unveiled at WWDC later this month) and not iPadOS 13.5.5.

That said, the lack of efficient alternatives to media keys has been a common complaint in recent iPad and iPad keyboard reviews across the Web, so we wouldn't be surprised if Apple prioritizes this.

Below: The steps you have to take to change keyboard backlight brightness on an iPad with the Magic Keyboard peripheral, from our Magic Keyboard review. Photos of the keyboard from our review are at the top of this article as well.

- To change the keyboard brightness, you first have to go to the Settings app...
Samuel Axon
- Then select General to get here, then select Keyboard.
Samuel Axon
- Then you have to select "Hardware Keyboard" at the top...
Samuel Axon
- Finally, you can adjust it with a slider here.
Samuel Axon

In any case, 9to5Mac notes that the shortcuts will probably be customizable in its analysis, should the feature reach users.

Over the past couple of years, Apple has put in significant effort to make the iPad a more viable laptop replacement—most recently with the introduction of mouse and trackpad support. However, many limitations still remain, like the fact that external monitors are limited to mirroring the iPad screen's view rather than extending it to give the user more space in which to work.

As noted above, Apple is almost certain to lay out its plans for iPadOS 14 at its virtual developer conference. That conference kicks off June 22.

Listing image by Samuel Axon

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