Top 20 ArchiCAD Tips & Shortcuts

There are many Keyboard shortcuts but we recommend you master these first. The entire list is available under the ArchiCAD "Help" menu called "ArchiCAD Shortcuts."

Note: Control key = Command key on Macintosh; Alt key = Option key on Macintosh

Technique	How To	What It Does
Creating Lines and Walls from the Keyboard		
1. To draw accurate single lines or walls	Press the Line or Wall Tool button. With Geometry Methods set for a single line or wall, start drawing, then hold down the Shift Key to constrain the line. Press the "r" key, then release fingers from all keys and type in the distance in the "r" field of the Coordinate Palette; press Enter.	Allows you to rapidly "dial-in" a building.
2. To draw linked walls or lines	Press the Line or Wall Tool button. With Geometry Methods set for linked lines or walls, start drawing, then hold down the Shift Key to constrain the line. Press the "r" key, then release fingers from all keys and type in the distance in the "r" field of the Coordinate Palette; press Enter. Then repeat the process for each new linked line.	Note: this and the above process uses "polar" coordinates to establish lines; x or y "Cartesian" coordinates can also be used, but you need to think about typing in negative distances when you want to go in the negative x or y directions.
Selections		
3. Quick selections	With a creation tool active, hold down the shift key and click on the desired element.	To select 2D or 3D objects without going to the Arrow Tool
4. Multiple selections	Hold down the Shift key and click on desired elements with the Arrow Tool.	To select one thing after the other
5. Multiple de-select	With the Shift Key held down, click on the elements you want to de-select.	To de-select one item after another
6. Selecting a class of elements	Choose the tool of the elements you wish to select and press Control + A.	Picks all of a certain type of elements
Creation Techniques		
7. Transformations (auto-trace)	Draw a 2D boundary with the Line, Arc, or Curve Tool; choose the Wall, Slab, or Roof Tool, hold down the space bar and click (Spacebar-click) on the 2D profile. This will allow the creation of a 3D complex object.	Models complex flat or sloped objects. You can auto-trace a wall system. The slab or roof "traces" the outside or inside line of walls or the edge of slabs.
8. Automatically establish a roof ridge	Create a roof on one side of the building, create another on the opposite side. With the Roof Tool active, shift + click on one roof to select it; Control + click on the opposing roof edge and ArchiCAD will reposition the edge you just clicked on to where both would meet at a common ridge. Then, drag the other roof's edge to meet that ridge.	
9. Automatically extend/adjust one roof pitch to another	Select the roof pitch you want to adjust to and Control + click on the edge you want to adjust. The edge you just clicked on will extend to meet the other roof plane.	Great for creating dormers
Editing Techniques		
10. Editing the shape of a roof, slab, or fill pattern	Select the roof, slab, or pattern with the Arrow Tool (or shift + click), **click on the**	**NOTE: it is very important to master this procedure of**

	tool that created the object to make it the active tool, then click and hold on a node to edit a corner, or click and hold on an edge to modify an edge.	**editing polygon-shaped 3D objects as soon as possible!**
11. Cut a rectangular or polygonal holes in a slab or roof	Select the slab or roof, choose the Slab or Roof Tool and draw inside the roof or slab with the polygon or rectangle geometry methods chosen,	
12. Cut a circular or curvalinear holes in a slab or roof	Draw a poly-line or curved shape inside the bounds of the slab or roof. Select the slab or roof, choose the Slab or Roof Tool and Spacebar-click on the shape you want to convert into a hole. The 2D shape will be transformed into a hole.	
13. Automatic trimming	With the appropriate creation tool active, Control + click on the unwanted overlap (cursor changes to scissors).	Removes "tail" of overlapping objects; works with walls, lines, arcs, circles, and spines
14. Automatic extending and adjusting elements	With the tool active that you are adjusting, Shift + click (pick) on the element you want to extend and then Control + click on the element you which to extend the element to.	Automatic "T" connections (works with multiple selections, too)
Drawing Techniques		
15. Measuring	**Option 1**: to set the start point of a measurement, press Alt + Shift, after obtaining the Checkmark Cursor, then move the cursor to the opposite end of what you want to measure and read the "r" distance in the Coordinate Palette. **Option 2**: click on the "X" tool in the Coordinate Box, click on a point where you want to measure from, then move the cursor to the opposite end of what you want to measure and read the "r" distance in the Coordinate Palette	To quickly measure a distance; sets a new user-definable (temporary) origin.
16. Repositioning project origin	Double-click the "X" button on the Coordinate Palette.	Resets the origin to its "center-of-the-world" or default position
17. Quick-calculating square footages	Double-click on the Fill Tool and make sure the "Show Area Text" box is checked. Trace the space with the Fill Tool and click the location on your floor plan of the square footage calculation.	
18. Pick parameters off an existing element	Alt + click on the element and the settings for that tool will be the settings from the element clicked on (cursor changes to an eye dropper).	Allows you to use existing objects placed in your drawing as the basis for new ones.
19. Transfer settings/parameters from one object to another	Alt + Control + click on an element to transfer its parameters to another existing object (cursor changes to a syringe).	
20. Suspend snap to grid temporarily	With Snap to Grid on, hold down the Escape Key	Allows you to draw unrestricted while Escape Key is held down.