

GNU Emacs Survival Card

for version 30

In the following, **C-z** means hit the ‘z’ key while holding down the *Ctrl* key. **M-z** means hit the ‘z’ key while hitting the *Meta* (labeled *Alt* on some keyboards) or after hitting *Esc* key.

Running Emacs

To enter GNU Emacs, just type its name: **emacs**. Emacs divides the frame into several areas: menu line, buffer area with the edited text, mode line describing the buffer in the window above it, and a minibuffer/echo area in the last line.

| | |
|----------------|--|
| C-x C-c | quit Emacs |
| C-x C-f | edit file; this command uses the minibuffer to read the file name; use this to create new files by entering the name of the new file |
| C-x C-s | save the file |
| C-x k | kill a buffer |
| C-g | in most context: cancel, stop, abort partially typed or executing command |
| C-x u | undo |

Moving About

| | |
|----------------|---|
| C-l | scroll current line to center of window |
| C-x b | switch to another buffer |
| M-< | move to beginning of buffer |
| M-> | move to end of buffer |
| M-g M-g | go to a given line number |

Multiple Windows

| | |
|--------------|--|
| C-x 0 | remove the current window from the display |
| C-x 1 | make active window the only window |
| C-x 2 | split window horizontally |
| C-x 3 | split window vertically |
| C-x o | move to other window |

Regions

Emacs defines a ‘region’ as the space between the *mark* and the *point*. A mark is set with **C-space**. The point is at the cursor position.

| | |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| M-h | mark entire paragraph |
| C-x h | mark entire buffer |

Killing and Copying

| | |
|--------------|---|
| C-w | kill region |
| M-w | copy region to kill-ring |
| C-k | kill from the cursor all the way to the end of the line |
| M-DEL | kill word |
| C-y | yank back the last kill (C-w C-y combination could be used to move text around) |
| M-y | replace last yank with previous kill |

Searching

| | |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| C-s | search for a string |
| C-r | search for a string backwards |
| RET | quit searching |
| M-C-s | regular expression search |
| M-C-r | reverse regular expression search |

Use **C-s** or **C-r** again to repeat the search in either direction.

Tags

Tags tables files record locations of function and procedure definitions, global variables, data types and anything else convenient. To create a tags table file, type ‘**etags input_files**’ as a shell command.

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| M-. | find a definition |
| M-, | pop back to where M-. was last invoked |
| M-x tags-query-replace | run query-replace on all files recorded in tags table |

Compiling

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| M-x compile | compile code in active window |
| C-c C-c | go to the next compiler error, when in the compile window or |
| C-x ‘ | when in the window with source code |

Dired, the Directory Editor

| | |
|--------------|--|
| C-x d | invoke Dired |
| d | flag this file for deletion |
| ~ | flag all backup files for deletion |
| u | remove deletion flag |
| x | delete the files flagged for deletion |
| C | copy file |
| g | update the Dired buffer |
| f | visit the file described on the current line |
| s | switch between alphabetical date/time order |

Reading and Sending Mail

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| M-x rmail | start reading mail |
| q | quit reading mail |
| h | show headers |
| d | mark the current message for deletion |
| x | remove all messages marked for deletion |
| C-x m | begin composing a message |
| C-c C-c | send the message and switch to another buffer |
| C-c C-f C-c | move to the ‘Cc’ header field, creating one if there is none |

Miscellaneous

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| M-q | fill paragraph |
| M-/ | expand previous word dynamically |
| C-z | iconify (suspend) Emacs when running it under X or shell, respectively |
| M-x revert-buffer | replace the text being edited with the text of the file on disk |

Query Replace

M-% interactively search and replace
M-C-% using regular expressions

Valid responses in query-replace mode are

SPC replace this one, go on to next
, replace this one, don't move
DEL skip to next without replacing
! replace all remaining matches
^ back up to the previous match
RET exit query-replace
C-r enter recursive edit (M-C-c to exit)

Regular Expressions

. (dot) any single character except a newline
* zero or more repeats
+ one or more repeats
? zero or one repeat
[. . .] denotes a class of character to match
[^. . .] negates the class
\c quote characters otherwise having a special meaning in regular expressions
... \|. . . \| . . . matches one of the alternatives ("or")
\(. . . \) groups a series of pattern elements to a single element
\\n same text as *n*th group
^ matches at line beginning
\$ matches at line end
\\w matches word-syntax character
\\W matches non-word-syntax character
\\< matches at word beginning
\\> matches at word end
\\b matches at word break
\\B matches at non-word break

Registers

C-x r s save region in register
C-x r i insert register contents into buffer
C-x r SPC save value of point in register
C-x r j jump to point saved in register

Rectangles

C-x r r copy rectangle to register
C-x r k kill rectangle
C-x r y yank rectangle
C-x r t prefix each line with a string
C-x r o open rectangle, shifting text right
C-x r c blank out rectangle

Shells

M-x shell start a shell within Emacs
M-! execute a shell command
M-| run a shell command on the region
C-u M-| filter region through a shell command

Spelling Check

M-\$ check spelling of word at the cursor
M-x ispell-region check spelling of all words in region
M-x ispell-buffer check spelling of entire buffer

International Character Sets

C-x RET C-\ select and activate input method for the current buffer
C-\ enable or disable input method
M-x list-input-methods show all input methods
M-x set-language-environment specify principal language
C-x RET c set coding system for next command
M-x find-file-literally visit file with no conversion of any kind
M-x list-coding-systems show all coding systems
M-x prefer-coding-system choose preferred coding system

Keyboard Macros

C-x (start defining a keyboard macro
C-x) end keyboard macro definition
C-x e execute last-defined keyboard macro
C-u C-x (append to last keyboard macro
M-x name-last-kbd-macro name last keyboard macro

Simple Customization

M-x customize customize variables and faces

Getting Help

Emacs does command completion for you. Typing M-x *tab* or *space* gives a list of Emacs commands.

C-h Emacs help
C-h t run the Emacs tutorial
C-h i enter Info, the documentation browser
C-h a show commands matching a string (apropos)
C-h k display documentation of the function invoked by keystroke

Emacs gets into different *modes*, each of which customizes Emacs for editing text of a particular sort. The mode line contains names of the current modes, in parentheses.

C-h m get mode-specific information

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