GNU Emacs Reference Card

(for version 18)

Starting Emacs

To enter Emacs, just type its name: `emacs`

To read in a file to edit, see Files, below.

Leaving Emacs

suspend Emacs (the usual way of leaving it)	`C-z`
exit Emacs permanently	`C-x C-c`

Files

read a file into Emacs	`C-x C-f`
save a file back to disk	`C-x C-s`
insert contents of another file into this buffer	`C-x i`
replace this file with the file you really want	`C-x C-v`
write buffer to a specified file	`C-x C-w`
run Dired, the directory editor	`C-x d`

Getting Help

The Help system is simple. Type `C-h` and follow the directions. If you are a first-time user, type `C-h t` for a **tutorial**. (This card assumes you know the tutorial.)

get rid of Help window	`C-x 1`
scroll Help window	`ESC C-v`
apropos: show commands matching a string	`C-h a`
show the function a key runs	`C-h c`
describe a function	`C-h f`
get mode-specific information	`C-h m`

Error Recovery

abort partially typed or executing command	`C-g`
recover a file lost by a system crash	`M-x recover-file`
undo an unwanted change	`C-x u` or `C-_`
restore a buffer to its original contents	`M-x revert-buffer`
redraw garbaged screen	`C-l`

Incremental Search

search forward	`C-s`
search backward	`C-r`
regular expression search	`C-M-s`

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

exit incremental search	`ESC`
undo effect of last character	`DEL`
abort current search	`C-g`

If Emacs is still searching, `C-g` will cancel the part of the search not done, otherwise it aborts the entire search.

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Motion

Cursor motion:

entity to move over	**backward**	**forward**
character	`C-b`	`C-f`
word	`M-b`	`M-f`
line	`C-p`	`C-n`
go to line beginning (or end)	`C-a`	`C-e`
sentence	`M-a`	`M-e`
paragraph	`M-[`	`M-]`
page	`C-x [`	`C-x ]`
sexp	`C-M-b`	`C-M-f`
function	`C-M-a`	`C-M-e`
go to buffer beginning (or end)	`M-<`	`M->`

Screen motion:

scroll to next screen	`C-v`
scroll to previous screen	`M-v`
scroll left	`C-x <`
scroll right	`C-x >`

Killing and Deleting

entity to kill	**backward**	**forward**
character (delete, not kill)	`DEL`	`C-d`
word	`M-DEL`	`M-d`
line (to end of)	`M-0 C-k`	`C-k`
sentence	`C-x DEL`	`M-k`
sexp	`M-- C-M-k`	`C-M-k`

kill **region**	`C-w`
kill to next occurrence of *char*	`M-z` *char*
yank back last thing killed	`C-y`
replace last yank with previous kill	`M-y`

Marking

set mark here	`C-@` or `C-SPC`
exchange point and mark	`C-x C-x`
set mark *arg* **words** away	`M-@`
mark **paragraph**	`M-h`
mark **page**	`C-x C-p`
mark **sexp**	`C-M-@`
mark **function**	`C-M-h`
mark entire **buffer**	`C-x h`

Query Replace

interactively replace a text string	`M-%`
using regular expressions	`M-x query-replace-regexp`

Valid responses in query-replace mode are

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

Multiple Windows

delete all other windows	`C-x 1`
delete this window	`C-x 0`
split window in 2 vertically	`C-x 2`
split window in 2 horizontally	`C-x 5`
scroll other window	`C-M-v`
switch cursor to another window	`C-x o`
shrink window shorter	`M-x shrink-window`
grow window taller	`C-x ^`
shrink window narrower	`C-x {`
grow window wider	`C-x }`
select a buffer in other window	`C-x 4 b`
find file in other window	`C-x 4 f`
compose mail in other window	`C-x 4 m`
run Dired in other window	`C-x 4 d`
find tag in other window	`C-x 4 .`

Formatting

indent current **line** (mode-dependent)	`TAB`
indent **region** (mode-dependent)	`C-M-\`
indent **sexp** (mode-dependent)	`C-M-q`
indent region rigidly *arg* columns	`C-x TAB`
insert newline after point	`C-o`
move rest of line vertically down	`C-M-o`
delete blank lines around point	`C-x C-o`
delete all whitespace around point	`M-\`
put exactly one space at point	`M-SPC`
fill **paragraph**	`M-q`
fill **region**	`M-g`
set fill column	`C-x f`
set prefix each line starts with	`C-x .`

Case Change

uppercase word	`M-u`
lowercase word	`M-l`
capitalize word	`M-c`
uppercase region	`C-x C-u`
lowercase region	`C-x C-l`
capitalize region	`M-x capitalize-region`

The Minibuffer

The following keys are defined in the minibuffer.

complete as much as possible	`TAB`
complete up to one word	`SPC`
complete and execute	`RET`
show possible completions	`?`
abort command	`C-g`

Type `C-x ESC` to edit and repeat the last command that used the minibuffer. The following keys are then defined.

previous minibuffer command	`M-p`
next minibuffer command	`M-n`

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Buffers

select another buffer	C-x b
list all buffers	C-x C-b
kill a buffer	C-x k

Transposing

transpose **characters**	C-t
transpose **words**	M-t
transpose **lines**	C-x C-t
transpose **sexps**	C-M-t

Spelling Check

check spelling of current word	M-$
check spelling of all words in region	M-x spell-region
check spelling of entire buffer	M-x spell-buffer

Tags

find tag	M-.
find next occurrence of tag	C-u M-.
specify a new tags file	M-x visit-tags-table
regexp search on all files in tags table	M-x tags-search
query replace on all the files	M-x tags-query-replace
continue last tags search or query-replace	M-,

Shells

execute a shell command	M-!
run a shell command on the region	M-|
filter region through a shell command	C-u M-|
start a shell in window *shell*	M-x shell

Rmail

scroll forward	SPC
scroll reverse	DEL
beginning of message	. (dot)
next non-deleted message	n
previous non-deleted message	p
next message	M-n
previous message	M-p
delete message	d
delete message and back up	C-d
undelete message	u
reply to message	r
forward message to someone	f
send mail	m
get newly arrived mail	g
quit Rmail	q
output message to another Rmail file	o
output message in Unix-mail style	C-o
show summary of headers	h

Regular Expressions

The following have special meaning inside a regular expression.

any single character	. (dot)
zero or more repeats	*
one or more repeats	+
zero or one repeat	?
any character in set	[...]
any character not in set	[^ ...]
beginning of line	^
end of line	$
quote a special character *c*	\c
alternative ("or")	|
grouping	\(... \)
*n*th group	\n
beginning of buffer	\`
end of buffer	\'
word break	\b
not beginning or end of word	\B
beginning of word	\<
end of word	\>
any word-syntax character	\w
any non-word-syntax character	\W
character with syntax *c*	\sc
character with syntax not *c*	\Sc

Registers

copy region to register	C-x x
insert register contents	C-x g
save point in register	C-x /
move point to saved location	C-x j

Info

enter the Info documentation reader	C-h i

Moving within a node:

scroll forward	SPC
scroll reverse	DEL
beginning of node	. (dot)

Moving between nodes:

next node	n
previous node	p
move **up**	u
select menu item by name	m
select *n*th menu item by number (1–5)	*n*
follow cross reference (return with l)	f
return to last node you saw	l
return to directory node	d
go to any node by name	g

Other:

run Info **tutorial**	h
list Info commands	?
quit Info	q
search nodes for regexp	s

Keyboard Macros

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

Commands Dealing with Emacs Lisp

eval **sexp** before point	C-x C-e
eval current **defun**	C-M-x
eval **region**	M-x eval-region
eval entire **buffer**	M-x eval-current-buffer
read and eval minibuffer	M-ESC
re-execute last minibuffer command	C-x ESC
read and eval Emacs Lisp file	M-x load-file
load from standard system directory	M-x load-library

Simple Customization

Here are some examples of binding global keys in Emacs Lisp. Note that you cannot say "\M-#"; you must say "\e#".

```
(global-set-key "\C-cg" 'goto-line)
(global-set-key "\e\C-r" 'isearch-backward-regexp)
(global-set-key "\e#" 'query-replace-regexp)
```

An example of setting a variable in Emacs Lisp:

```
(setq backup-by-copying-when-linked t)
```

Writing Commands

```
(defun ⟨command-name⟩ (⟨args⟩)
  "⟨documentation⟩"
  (interactive "⟨template⟩")
  ⟨body⟩)
```

An example:

```
(defun this-line-to-top-of-screen (line)
  "Reposition line point is on to the top of
the screen.  With ARG, put point on line ARG.
Negative counts from bottom."
  (interactive "P")
  (recenter (if (null line)
                0
              (prefix-numeric-value line))))
```

The argument to **interactive** is a string specifying how to get the arguments when the function is called interactively. Type C-h f **interactive** for more information.

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