

The quick and dirty key guide to emacs

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Meta is the alt or special meta key (shortened to M).

1 Moving around

Arrow keys (obvious), `ctrl+a` - move to start of line, `ctrl+e` - move to end of line, `meta+a` - move to beginning of paragraph, `meta+e` - move to end of para.

`meta+f` - move forward a word, `meta+b` - move back word.

`home` - start of document, `end` - end of document (though is changed in emacs 21).

2 Undo

`ctrl+_` (`ctrl+shift+-`).

3 Saving and loading

`ctrl+x, ctrl+f` - load a file in, `ctrl+x, ctrl+s` - save current file, `ctrl+x, ctrl+c` - exit emacs.

`ctrl+x, 5, 2` - open up a new window, `ctrl+x, 2` - split window, `ctrl+x, 1` - unsplit window.

4 Searching and replacing

Press `ctrl+s`, and start typing text to search for (you can press delete if you mess up), position moves to first place text is found, press `ctrl+s` to move to next.

Press `meta+%` (or use menu) to search and replace text. Type search text, press enter, type replace text, press enter, press 'y' to replace each one or '!' to replace them all.

5 Copying and pasting

Copying and pasting is either done with the mouse (click left, drag to select. Middle-click to paste), or with the keyboard.

To copy, go to the start of the text you want to copy, press `ctrl+space`, go to end, press `meta+w` (or to cut press `ctrl+w`). To paste into current place use `ctrl+y`. Previously copied bits of text are kept under 'Select and Paste' in the edit menu.

There are also commands for cutting and pasting rectangles (remember those!).

6 Spell checking

emacs can spell check \LaTeX documents and plain text. Try menu Tools, Spell Checking, Spell Check Buffer (press space to skip word, number to replace with suggestion, 'r' to replace with own, 'x' to leave). To check a word, move cursor over it, press `meta+$`.

7 Help

emacs has *extensive* manuals under 'Help' (try Help, Manuals, Browse Manuals with Info). Try the emacs tutorial if you want to (`ctrl+h, t`). emacs is completely customisable and programmable, so you can always write some code to fix something you don't like! emacs is configured with its `~/ .emacs` file.

8 Don't!

Care pressing `ctrl+w` (remember the undo key). Don't try reading your email in emacs unless you understand the consequences!