

# GNU Emacs Survival Card

for version 31

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.

|                |                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>C-x C-c</b> | quit Emacs                                                                                                                           |
| <b>C-x C-f</b> | 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 |
| <b>C-x C-s</b> | save the file                                                                                                                        |
| <b>C-x k</b>   | kill a buffer                                                                                                                        |
| <b>C-g</b>     | in most context: cancel, stop, abort partially typed or executing command                                                            |
| <b>C-x u</b>   | undo                                                                                                                                 |

## Moving About

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

## Multiple Windows

|              |                                            |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <b>C-x 0</b> | remove the current window from the display |
| <b>C-x 1</b> | make active window the only window         |
| <b>C-x 2</b> | split window horizontally                  |
| <b>C-x 3</b> | split window vertically                    |
| <b>C-x o</b> | 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.

|              |                       |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| <b>M-h</b>   | mark entire paragraph |
| <b>C-x h</b> | mark entire buffer    |

## Killing and Copying

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

## Searching

|              |                                   |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>C-s</b>   | search for a string               |
| <b>C-r</b>   | search for a string backwards     |
| <b>RET</b>   | quit searching                    |
| <b>M-C-s</b> | regular expression search         |
| <b>M-C-r</b> | 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.

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

## Compiling

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

## Dired, the Directory Editor

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

## Reading and Sending Mail

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

## Miscellaneous

|                          |                                                                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>M-q</b>               | fill paragraph                                                         |
| <b>M-/</b>               | expand previous word dynamically                                       |
| <b>C-z</b>               | iconify (suspend) Emacs when running it under X or shell, respectively |
| <b>M-x revert-buffer</b> | 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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For more Emacs documentation, and the TeX  
source for this card, see the Emacs distribution,  
or <https://www.gnu.org/software/emacs>