Emacs Extensible text editor

START HERE

Ctrl + X › Ctrl + F
Open a file

Ctrl + S
Search forward

Ctrl + X › Ctrl + S
Save the buffer

Ctrl + /
Undo

Ctrl + G
Cancel anything

Ctrl + H › k
What does this key do?

Alt + X
Run a command by name

Ctrl + X › Ctrl + C
Quit Emacs

Frame the OS window
Window a view onto one buffer
Buffer text, maybe a file; point is the cursor

CONCEPTS

Emacs writes C-x as Ctrl+X and M-x as Alt+X (Meta). A space separates steps: Ctrl+X Ctrl+F means press Ctrl+X, release, then Ctrl+F.

No Alt key (terminal, macOS)? Press Esc, release, then the key: Esc x is Alt+X. On macOS set Option as Meta in your terminal.

Buffers hold the text, windows only show them. Closing a window (Ctrl+X 0) does not kill its buffer.

FILES & BUFFERS

Ctrl + X › Ctrl + F
Open or create a file
Naming a directory opens Dired.

Ctrl + X › Ctrl + S
Save buffer

Ctrl + X › Ctrl + C
Quit Emacs

Ctrl + X › B Switch buffer

Ctrl + X › Ctrl + B
List all buffers

Ctrl + X › K Kill a buffer

Ctrl + X › Ctrl + W
Save as another file

Ctrl + X › S
Save all modified buffers

Ctrl + X › Ctrl + Q
Toggle read-only
In Dired it edits file names as text; Ctrl+C Ctrl+C applies.

Alt + X › revert-buffer
Reload file from disk

WINDOWS

Ctrl + X › 2
Split top / bottom

Ctrl + X › 3
Split side by side

Ctrl + X › O
Go to other window

Ctrl + X › 1
Keep only this window

Ctrl + X › 0
Close this window

Ctrl + Alt + V
Scroll the other window

MOVEMENT

Ctrl + F / Ctrl + B
Char forward / back

Ctrl + N / Ctrl + P
Next / previous line

Ctrl + A / Ctrl + E
Line start / end

Alt + F / Alt + B
Word forward / back

Ctrl + V / Alt + V
Page down / up

Alt + < / Alt + >
Buffer start / end

Alt + G › G Go to line

Ctrl + L
Recenter, then top, bottom

Alt + M
Back to first non-blank

Alt + { / Alt + }
Paragraph back / forward

Ctrl + Alt + F / Ctrl + Alt + B
Sexp forward / back
Jumps over a balanced expression or bracket pair.

KILL & YANK

Ctrl + K Kill to end of line

Ctrl + W Kill region (cut)

Alt + W Copy region

Ctrl + Y Yank (paste)

Alt + Y
Replace yank with older kill
Only directly after Ctrl+Y; repeat to cycle the kill ring.

Ctrl + D Delete char forward

Alt + D Kill word forward

Alt + Backspace
Kill word backward

Alt + ^
Join with previous line

Ctrl + X › Ctrl + T
Transpose lines

Alt + U / Alt + L / Alt + C
Upcase / downcase / capitalise word

Ctrl + Alt + \
Indent region for the mode

MARK & REGION

Ctrl + Space Set the mark
Mark to point is the region. On some terminals use Ctrl+@.

MARK & REGION (cont.)

Ctrl + X › Ctrl + X
Swap point and mark

Ctrl + X › H
Select whole buffer

Alt + H Mark paragraph

Ctrl + Alt + H Mark function

Ctrl + U › Ctrl + Space
Jump back to previous mark
Repeat to walk the mark ring.

SEARCH & REPLACE

Ctrl + S Search forward
Press again for the next match; Enter stops, Ctrl+G returns to start.

Ctrl + R Search backward

Alt + % Query replace

Space / y
Replace this, go on

n / Backspace Skip this one

! Replace all remaining

Ctrl + Alt + S
Regexp search forward

Ctrl + Alt + %
Query replace regexp

Alt + X › replace-string
Replace everywhere, no asking

Alt + X › occur
List matching lines

Alt + X › grep
Run grep, jump to hits

UNDO & CANCEL

Ctrl + G
Abort the current command

Ctrl + / Undo
Also Ctrl+X U or Ctrl+_. Repeat to undo further.

Esc › Esc › Esc
Escape everything

Ctrl + U › <n>
Repeat next command n times

RECTANGLES & REGISTERS

Ctrl + X › R › K
Kill rectangle
Mark one corner, move to the opposite one first.

Ctrl + X › R › Y
Yank rectangle

Ctrl + X › R › T
Prefix each line with text

KEYBOARD MACROS

Ctrl + X › (
Start recording macro

Ctrl + X ›) Stop recording

Ctrl + X › E Run last macro
Then press e to repeat; Ctrl+U 0 Ctrl+X E runs it until an error.

COMMANDS & HELP

Alt + X
Run command by name

Ctrl + H › t
Open the tutorial

Ctrl + H › k Describe a key

Ctrl + H › f
Describe a function

Ctrl + H › a
Apropos: find commands by word

Ctrl + H › m
Describe current modes

DIRED

Ctrl + X › D
Open a directory in Dired

Ctrl + X › Ctrl + J
Dired of this file's folder

Enter Open file or folder

m / u Mark / unmark file

d Flag file for deletion

x Delete flagged files

RECIPES

Comment out a block with a rectangle

```
# mark start of first line,
move to last line start
Ctrl+Space
Ctrl+X R T   ;; prompt: type ';;
' and Enter
```

Rename every foo to bar, ask each time

```
Alt+<
Alt+%
foo Enter bar Enter
# y / n each match, ! for the
rest
```

Edit a macro 100 times over lines

```
Ctrl+X (   # record on the
first line
Ctrl+A ... edit ... Ctrl+N
Ctrl+X )
Ctrl+U 100 Ctrl+X E
```

Tidy a copied block of code

```
Ctrl+X H
Ctrl+Alt+\
Ctrl+X Ctrl+S
```