

Essential Emacs Commands and Key-Bindings for INF4820

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A Note on Terminology

Emacs stores everything in so-called *buffers*. A buffer may simply display the contents of a file, it can hold a command prompt, show messages, etc. The so-called *minibuffer* displayed at the bottom of the window is a small special-purpose buffer used for issuing Emacs commands. (Screenshot included the end of the document.)

In Emacs, when something is *killed* it is cut and copied to the *kill ring* (like a clipboard with memory). *Yanking* means pasting elements from the kill ring.

In the following, C refers to the Control / Ctrl key, M means Meta / Alt, and C-h t means 'hold Ctrl while pushing h, then release both and push t'. Be aware that some of the commands will wait for further input in the minibuffer.

Files and Buffers

C-x C-f	open file
C-x C-s	save file
C-x s	save all open files
C-x C-w	save as
C-x C-c	exit Emacs
C-x k	close buffer
C-x b	switch buffer
C-x 2	horizontally split window in two
C-x 3	vertically split window in two
C-x 1	show only one buffer in window
C-x o	move between buffers in split window
M-x	run command in minibuffer*

*Tip: When entering text in the minibuffer, use TAB for auto-complete or arrows for flipping through the command history. Press enter to select or C-g to abort.

Editing

C-SPC	set mark
C-a	move to beginning of line
C-e	move to end of line
M-<	move to beginning of buffer
M->	move to end of buffer
C-w	kill (cut) marked region
C-k	kill line
C-BS	kill preceding word (meta+backspace)
M-w	copy marked region to kill ring
C-y	yank (paste) last thing killed
M-y	replace last yank, iterating through kill ring
C-_	undo
C-g	abort partially typed* or executing command
C-s	search forward**
C-r	search backward**
C-h b	display the key-bindings in effect in the current buffer
C-h ?	display help topics
C-h t	start Emacs tutorial

Tip:

*Useful for aborting minibuffer interaction.

**Type the search string in the minibuffer or hit C-w to select the next word(s) after the cursor. Hit C-s/C-r again to repeat previous search.

Lisp Mode Commands

When opening a file with a '.lisp' / '.cl' extension, Emacs will automatically activate Lisp mode for the buffer. Toplevel interaction with Lisp will take place in a buffer called *common-lisp* containing a Lisp prompt waiting for input. Commands prefixed with a colon should be entered at the Lisp prompt. (All commands assume we're using Allegro Common Lisp.)

C-c C-c	interrupt current computation
C-c C-p	iterate command history backwards
C-c C-n	iterate command history from the start
:ld file	load the code from 'file.lisp' (not necessarily compiled)
:cl file	compile and load 'file.lisp'
:pwd	print current working directory
:cd	change current working directory
:exit	quit ACL
C-c TAB	auto-complete symbols from the Lisp environment
TAB	pretty indent line
C-c C-q	pretty indent s-exp
C-c C-s	evaluate preceding S-expression
C-c C-b	evaluate current buffer
C-c C-z	show the callers of a function
C-c .	locate source / definition
C-c ;	comment region

Debugging and Error Handling: Except for the tracing functions, the following commands should be used in the context of errors reported by the Allegro CL environment. For more information on using the Allegro CL debugger, see <http://www.franz.com/support/documentation/current/doc/debugging.htm>.

:continue	resume the interrupted computation
:reset	exit all break points and return to top-level prompt
:zoom	inspect the latest function call and arguments (evaluation stack)
:local	prints information on local variables in the current stack frame
:bt	show back-trace of recent function calls
:trace foo	trace all calls and returns for function 'foo'
:untrace	turn off all tracing

