Tips for working with R

a **statsTeachR** resource

Two key questions

- What do you want R to do?
  e.g.

  ```
  mean()

  median()
  ```

- What must R know to do that?

R is case-sensitive

For example:

```
a <- 1:10
mean(a)

## [1] 5.5

Mean(a)

## Error:   could not find function "Mean"
```

Also, many different syntax/capitalization schemes in different packages, functions, e.g. camelCase, separated.by.dots, nick_uses_underscores.

R function syntax

Most (not all!) R functions use the following syntax:

```r
my_function(argument_1, argument_2, ...)
```

- Arguments surrounded by rounded parentheses
- If you type a function name without the parentheses, you will see the code for that function.

Use TAB completion and arrows!

- ▶ If you begin a command and hit the TAB key, R and RStudio will show you a list of possible ways to complete the command.
- ▶ If you hit TAB after the opening parenthesis of a function, RStudio will display the list of arguments it expects.
- ▶ The up and down arrows can be used to retrieve past commands when working in the console.

Recognize errors quickly

- If you see a + prompt, it means R is waiting for more input. Often this means that you have forgotten a closing parenthesis or made some other syntax error.
- If you have messed up and just want to get back to the normal prompt, press the escape key and start the command fresh.