

Using Igor for Heavy-Duty Jobs

If you generate a lot of raw data or need to do custom technical computing, you will find it worthwhile to learn how to put Igor to heavy-duty use. It is possible to automate some or all of the steps involved in loading, processing, and presenting your data. To do this, you must learn how to write Igor procedures.

Igor includes a built-in programming environment that lets you manipulate waves, graphs, tables and all other Igor objects. You can invoke built-in operations and functions from your own procedures to build higher-level operations customized for your work.

Learning to write Igor procedures is easier than learning a lower-level language such as FORTRAN or C. The Igor programming environment is interactive so you can write and test small routines and then put them together piece-by-piece. You can deal with very high level objects such as waves and graphs but you also have fine control over your data. Nonetheless, it is still programming. To master it requires an effort on your part.

The Igor programming environment is described in detail in **Volume IV Programming**. You can get started by reading the first three chapters of that volume.

You can also learn about Igor programming by examining the WaveMetrics Procedures and example experiments that were installed on your hard disk.

Igor Documentation

Igor includes an extensive online help system and a comprehensive PDF manual.

The online help provides guided tours, tooltips, general usage information for all aspects of Igor, and reference information for Igor operations, functions and keywords.

The PDF manual contains the same information except for the tooltips.

The PDF manual, being in book format, is better organized for linear reading while the online help is usually preferred for reference information.

Tooltips

Igor displays tooltips when you hover the mouse over an icon or dialog item.

You can turn tooltips off using the Miscellaneous Settings dialog. Choose **Misc→Miscellaneous Settings**, click the Help icon on the left, and uncheck the Show Tooltips checkbox.

The Igor Help System

The Help menu provides access to Igor's help system, primarily through the Igor Help Browser.

- To display the Igor Help Browser, use the Help menu, click the question-mark icon in the command window, or press F1 (*Windows only*).
- Use the Igor Help Browser Help Topics tab to browse help topics.
- Use the Igor Help Browser Shortcuts tab to get a list of handy shortcuts and techniques.
- Use the Igor Help Browser Command Help tab to get reference information on Igor operations and functions. You can also right-click operation and function names in Igor windows to access the reference help.
- Use the Igor Help Browser Search tab to search Igor help, procedure and example files.

Most of the information displayed by the help browser comes from help files that are automatically loaded at launch time. The **Help→Help Windows** submenu provides direct access to these help files.

The Igor Manual

The Igor PDF manual resides in "Igor Pro Folder/Manual". You can access it by choosing **Help→Manual**.

The manual consists of five volumes and an index.