



# What advice would you give someone looking to use their keyboard more and their mouse less?



Ben Halpern   May 17 · 1 min read

#discuss

How does one break a mouse dependency in a practical way?

Add to the discussion



PREVIEW

SUBMIT



Jim Plourde 

May 17 

Learn vim by setting your default terminal editor as vim and download a vim keymapping for your favorite IDE. You can even further the experience by downloading vimium for Firefox or Chrome. It will get you far in most systems.

If vim isn't your thing, learn the shortcuts of your favorite IDE and of your OS.

If like me you typed for the last 20 years with weird bad habits, now is a good time to learn touch typing. It makes typing easier and you'll learn your shortcuts faster.

It is a habit thing, first week feels clunky but surprisingly you muscle memory builds up rapidly.



13

REPLY



Ryan Will  

May 17 



Jim Plourde May 17 

I mean it's the best of both worlds: You get all the awesome features of a modern IDE while using a powerful text input tool



REPLY

Javier Manzano May 17 

- Vimium for the browser :)



REPLY

Jim Plourde May 17 

The scroll is so smooth and satisfying I can't live without it.



REPLY

edA-qa mort-ora-y  May 17 

First decide why you want to break your dependence on the mouse. Different goals will have different approaches.

*Physical Concerns:* Many people suffer from wrist/arm/shoulder/back issues due to using the mouse. I'm in this camp. I now use a left and right mouse to reduce one-sided stress. I try to only play games that use a game controller. I have a [vertical mouse](#). I do stretches and exercises. I tried a controller->mouse pointer driver once, as well as keyboard driven pointer -- both difficult, but an option if necessary.

*Speed:* A lot of things are faster if done on the keyboard. The first of these are basic computer operations. Learn to do as much as possible in the console -- learning Bash helps. This also gives more flexibility when managing files. Learn shortcuts in apps. Learn about global shortcuts in your OS. Even before shortcuts, learn basic app operation, like menus, via the keyboard. And of course learn touch typing if you already haven't -- I consider this a prerequisite to be a programmer though, even if you're the mouse using type.

Both of these will take practice, but neither of them require a discrete switch -- they can be improved over time. Though it will take a conscious effort to do it, forcing yourself a bit in the beginning.



REPLY



The most drastic option I can think of is to just unplug your mouse and put it away. That might not be super realistic though since you'll probably come across a website or software that just wasn't designed for use without a mouse. I did this when I first got a drawing tablet. Helps you get used to visualizing the area of your screen as the little rectangle sitting on your desk.

The most likely step would be to either print off or download all the keyboard shortcuts for whatever software you're using. Even Reddit and Twitter have keyboard shortcuts for navigating through posts, upvoting/liking, etc.

Knowing keyboard shortcuts keeps your hands on the keyboard which means less time moving back and forth and more time just working.



5

REPLY

Petar Petrov  

May 17 ■■■

Switch to using the mouse on the other side.

I recently started having issues with some of my fingers on my right hand. Probably CTS related or so. Anyway, because of that I started using the mouse with my left hand. It turned out that it's got rather cumbersome to use most keyboard combinations with my right hand, so this kind of forced me to switch to using just the keyboard more often than before.



4

REPLY

Alexis Benamar 

May 17 ■■■

I'd say, 3 things:

- Find resources that shows shortcuts for your most used apps (IDE, web browser, OS). By reading through it, you might find some that you never thought could exist but are a huge time saver.
- This might be hard at first, but try unplugging your mouse directly. You'll be more inclined to find workarounds that way. (I once had a half-broken mouse and was so annoyed with it that I became used to not using it at all)
- Finally, embrace the almighty power of the `TAB` key



3

REPLY



May 17 ■■■



bonus: mechanical keyboards can be customizable



6

REPLY

Brandon  May 17 

`Crtl + shift + p`

Opens up this command prompt type thing in VS Code. You can search files, run the program, debug, open files, convert spaces to tabs.

If it's something you can do in VS Code, you can do it within this tiny but awesome window!

Like Alfred, but specifically for VS Code!

If you have a Mac:

it's shift + command p. Taken from here [code.visualstudio.com/shortcuts/ke...](https://code.visualstudio.com/shortcuts/ke...)



3

REPLY

pius ik  May 17 

I'm a C guy using notepad++. I still use my mouse when "necessary". Sometimes it makes sense to just use the mouse. but trust me, using the keyboard is fast and enjoyable. Try to use your command prompt to do simple tasks like starting your code editor. That should get you started.



3

REPLY

George Rodier  May 17 

My best advice is don't learn everything at once. Identify the areas you use the mouse the most and learn those keyboard shortcuts first. Maybe it's something as simple as saving OR maybe it's text selection. Once you learn those shortcuts, find another one. Over time you can slowly build up a knowledge base that will help take you away from the mouse.

I still use the mouse more than I'd probably like, but I've started this approach and am seeing great success!



3

REPLY



Try out a tiling window manager like i3 or BSPWM! Vim or vim-like bindings for your editor are also an excellent start. cVim inside Chrome means that the only thing I ever have to use a mouse for is clicking links.

Pro-mode: get a programmable mechanical keyboard (something that runs QMK) and bind browser/editor key combos directly into your keyboard



REPLY

Vincent Boiteau-Robert May 17 

If you are using macOS and you are looking for a tiling window manager, you can look into chunkwm combined with skhd.



REPLY

gpynes May 17 

Home row arrow keys, hands down.

An old colleague changed my life by turning me onto having home row arrow keys. You can achieve this pretty simply by remapping `caps lock` to something like `fn` or `ctrl` and then setting a macro so when that is held the `ijkl` keys they become arrow keys. This has made my productivity with a keyboard skyrocket! It works for all aspects of the your OS and you don't need to learn crazy new key combos or anything, just get used to not moving your right hand.

This app helps remap the keyboard for this:

[github.com/tekezo/Karabiner-Elements](https://github.com/tekezo/Karabiner-Elements)

Feel free to reach out if you want my settings file for how to remap :)



REPLY

Inigo Garcia Bastida May 17 

I'd recommend you switch your code editor to VIM or Emacs, the learning curve is a little bit steep but in the long run If you want to be less dependent on your mouse when you code it's a good start.



REPLY



This is what I use:

- linux with a window manager instead of a DE (i3wm specifically)
- spacemacs as main editor
- spacemacs key bindings in all the other IDEs (check out my project [github.com/Marcoleni/intelli-space](https://github.com/Marcoleni/intelli-space) and [github.com/VSpaceCode/VSpaceCode](https://github.com/VSpaceCode/VSpaceCode) )

[REPLY](#)

Jake Wesorick  

May 17 

I'm not an expert here but have had similar plans. I know you can do everything with Vim shortcuts. [VSCode](#), [Chrome](#), and then maybe learning [mac keyboard shortcuts](#). And then put your mouse on the left side of your keyboard.

[REPLY](#)

Dian Fay 

May 17 

Look for tools that support keyboard-driven workflows (vim, tiling window managers, command-line over graphical tools, browser plugins like surfingkeys) and recognize that you're going to have to adapt how you've become used to manipulating a computer and that it's a process.

And take it slow! I think "unplug your mouse" is extremely bad advice, or at least shortsighted. Depriving yourself of a useful tool simply because you want to learn another in more depth breeds resentment and increases the odds of giving up. Use the keyboard because it's faster, use the keyboard because it's better on your wrists, but above all use the keyboard because you *want* to, not because you're forcing yourself to.

[REPLY](#)

agtoever 

May 18 

The easiest is to grab an application that shows you the keyboard shortcut every time you perform an action with the mouse. For example, if you use your mouse to click Edit > Copy, these programs will pop up the shortcut (Ctrl+C for Windows or Cmd+C for Mac). For Windows, there is Keyrocket and for Mac there is Eve.



Make using the mouse a thing that you *notice*, because you almost certainly don't notice it right now. Put something on your mouse like a post-it note. It'll feel a little uncomfortable to use, and each time you reach for it you'll *notice*.

Once you're aware (in more than a vague, goal-oriented way) of how much you're using it, think each time you use it, "did I need to use the mouse for this action?"



1

REPLY

Josh Leong  May 18 

I've seen quite a few guides on VIM but I cannot for the life of it get it to show the same screen with file directories and all the other bells and whistles. Any good articles you might recommend in the sea of the ones out there already? I'm looking to make this switch as well asap.



1

REPLY

Marco leni May 18 

Try spacemacs, if emacs doesn't work for you there is also spacevim :)

These two projects have very nice defaults so you don't have to worry about a lot of stuff.



1

REPLY

Andrew Brown  May 18 

unplug your mouse from your computer.



2

REPLY

Chris Bertrand May 17 

Use your keyboard more, and your mouse less!



1

REPLY





Use the proven tmux+vim combo.



## tmux for developers

Arijit Basu · 3 min read

#tmux #development #terminal



sayanarijit / .files

Just some files for my personal use

### My Dotfiles

Here is the technique I use to automate setting up my dev environment in mac using [dotfiles](#) while keeping it up-to-date.

It's all based on Makefile.

#### Setup

```
cd && git clone https://github.com/sayanarijit/.files && cd .files &&
```

#### Sync

```
dotsync
```

Or

[View on GitHub](#)


Update: consider using neovim. It's the modern vim.



1

REPLY



C.S. Rhymes  

May 18 

In PhpStorm I've started using double shift to search everything rather than scrolling through files in the project tree







1. unplug the real mouse
2. stay at the command line more often
3. use soft keyboard based mouse ( number pad keyboard mouse is my fav)
4. avoid the gui (this is #2 again isn't it?)



1

REPLY



sadder sCrypt Kiddie



May 17



VIM, TMUX, I3WM... and a lot of free time learning



1

REPLY



Thorsten Hirsch



May 17



Buy a laptop! (...and don't plug a mouse in it)



1

REPLY

[code of conduct - report abuse](#)

Classic DEV Post from May 10

## If you could change one thing about learning to code, what would it be?



Ali Spittel

If you could wave a magic wand and make your biggest challenge when you were lear...

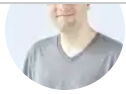


97



70





Let's end timed coding challenges, together.

Jonathan Silvestri - May 17



How much time on average do you spent coding outside of full-time work?

Lenmor Ld - May 16



Web Developer Starting Salaries

Hiatt Zhao - May 17



Can I Borrow Some Time From Someone with a Mac & iPhone? Safari Debugging Question.

Jack Harner - May 14

[Home](#) [About](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Terms of Use](#) [Contact](#) [Code of Conduct](#)

DEV Community copyright 2016 - 2019 🔥

