

Command-Line Editing Cheatsheet

For Bash. Compatible with most other shells.

Move

KEY BINDING	ACTION
<code>Ctrl</code> + <code>A</code>	Move to Line Begin
<code>Ctrl</code> + <code>E</code>	Move to Line End
<code>Ctrl</code> + <code>B</code>	Move Back One Character
<code>Meta</code> + <code>B</code>	Move Back One Word
<code>Ctrl</code> + <code>F</code>	Move Forward One Character
<code>Meta</code> + <code>F</code>	Move Forward One Word

Delete

KEY BINDING	ACTION
<code>Ctrl</code> + <code>H</code>	Delete One Character Before Cursor
<code>Ctrl</code> + <code>D</code>	Delete One Character At Cursor

Kill & Yank

KEY BINDING	ACTION
<code>Ctrl</code> + <code>U</code>	Kill from Cursor to Line Begin
<code>Ctrl</code> + <code>K</code>	Kill from Cursor to Line End
<code>Ctrl</code> + <code>W</code>	Kill from Cursor to Previous Whitespace
<code>Meta</code> + <code>Backspace</code>	Kill from Cursor to Word Begin
<code>Meta</code> + <code>D</code>	Kill from Cursor to Word End
<code>Ctrl</code> + <code>Y</code>	Yank - Put Killed Text Back at Cursor
<code>Meta</code> + <code>Y</code>	Yank-pop - Rotate Kill-Ring, and Put Back New Top

History

KEY BINDING	ACTION
<code>Ctrl</code> + <code>R</code>	Reverse History Search
<code>Ctrl</code> + <code>S</code>	Forward History Search
<code>Ctrl</code> + <code>G</code>	Abort History Search, and Restore

Others

KEY BINDING	ACTION
<code>Ctrl</code> + <code>-</code>	Undo
<code>Ctrl</code> + <code>X</code> <code>Ctrl</code> + <code>U</code>	Undo
<code>Ctrl</code> + <code>C</code>	Send <code>SIGINT</code> (Cancel)
<code>Ctrl</code> + <code>D</code>	Send <code>EOF</code>
<code>Ctrl</code> + <code>J</code>	Send <code>Line Feed</code>
<code>Ctrl</code> + <code>L</code>	Clear Screen, and Reprint Current Line

FAQ

How to invoke `Meta` ?

Press `Alt` or `Option`. Alternatively, press `Esc` first, and then press the key it modifies.

This is usually configurable. For example, in `iTerm2`, a macOS terminal, from `Preferences > Profiles > Keys`, you have the option to configure how the left and right `Option` keys would behave, among

- Normal
- `Meta`
- `Esc` +

What is the difference between delete and kill?

If you *delete* something, it's gone. If you *kill* something, it's still possible to get it back -- from the kill-ring, using `yank` and `yank-pop`.

What is yank?

To `kill` is to cut. To `yank` is to paste. The difference is that `kill` and `yank` are more advanced than the usual cut and paste. With `yank` and `yank-pop` you have access to an entire ring of recently killed text.