

Android Studio Tips & Tricks: Moving Around

october 14, 2013

There are two things that you should know about me:

1. I am an IDE enthusiast
2. I am a productivity geek

So two years ago, when I switched to **IntelliJ IDEA**, on which **Android Studio** is based, I spent a lot of time looking for shortcuts and techniques to become more productive. Since you are here, I suspect you might be doing the same so I'll try to make it easier and faster for you!

In this series, we will go from very basic productivity tricks that everyone should know to more advanced topics in Android Studio.

About Keymaps

Android Studio provides different keymaps (the mapping between shortcut keys and an action). You can choose which keymap you are using in *Settings->Keymap*.

It wouldn't be practical to list the shortcuts for every keymap so the following will be used:

Windows: Default

Linux: Default

OSX: Mac OSX 10.5+ (not the default one! JetBrains and I highly suggest that you use this one)



Moving Around

We spend a lot of time navigating in our code base, let's try to do it more efficiently.

Opening Class/File/Symbol

Open class



Imagine that you must go to a class named “MainActivity”, just use this shortcut and start typing

Open File



Works like the “Open Class” shortcut but on every files in your project. It is very useful to open your `AndroidManifest.xml` or anything that sits in the *res/* or *assets/* folder.

Open Symbol



A very powerful but little less known variation of the previous tips: You can use this to go directly to a method or field by searching its name!

For example, if you know that you have a method named `getFormattedDate()` somewhere in your code, you can type it in the Open Symbol dialog to go directly to it.

Tips

Partial Matching

You can enter incomplete strings and it will work. For example, if you are searching for a class named “ItemDetailFragment”, you can actually type “IDF” and it will find it.

Line Number

Imagine that your colleague just told you that the juicy part is in *ExcitingClass* at line 23. You can go directly to the file by appending a “:” to the class name in the *Open Class* dialog. e.g.:

```
ExcitingClass:22
```

You can also combine it with partial matching and type something like:

```
EC:22
```

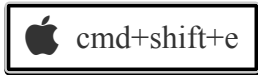
Recent Files

Recently opened files



This will show a popup listing the files you navigated to previously.

Recently edited files



Same as the above but listing only files that have been edited.

Tip:

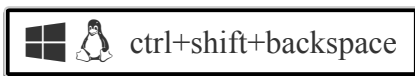
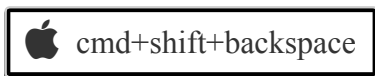
Start typing to filter the list.

Navigate Back/Forward



To understand this shortcut, think about how the back and forward buttons work in a web browser. Instead of thinking in web pages, think about source code! So when you drill down in code or open a file, the IDE will remember where you were before, allowing you to quickly go back.

Last Edit Location



This is a variation on the “Navigate Back” shortcut that cycles between the locations where you touched something.

Picture yourself fixing a nasty bug. You think you have the solution so you start fixing it but then you have to look at the Android source code and a couple other classes in your project. You enter which leads you to another class, which leads you to another thing and 20 steps later, you finally have the insight needed to complete your fix... but in which file and at what line were you again? Just use this shortcut and you are right back at the exact line where you stopped writing.

Show Usage

In a Persistent Panel



Shows where something is used. For a class member, it will show where reads and writes are made. For a method, it will show where it is called. For a class, it will show where new instances are created.

You can use the arrow keys and the return key to navigate through results. You can then press the `⌘+⌘` to go back to the editor.

In Place



Same as before but shows the information in a popup.

Goto Declaration/Implementation (Drill Down)

Here are three shortcuts to drill down into a symbol:

Goto Declaration



Goes to the declaration of the class, method or variable. Mostly useful on classes and methods since it redirects to the implementation.

Goto Implementation



Shows a list of all the classes/interfaces implementing the selected class/interface. Also works on methods to find where they are implemented/overridden. On variables, it has the same effect as *Goto Declaration*.

Goto Type Declaration



When the caret is on a variable, it will go to the declaration of its type. For example, if I have the following line:

```
Developer phil = new Developer("Phil");
```

If the caret is on the variable “phil”, this shortcut will go to the declaration of the “Developer” class.

Goto Super



This will open the parent of the current symbol. Pretty much the opposite of *Goto Implementation* cursor is in an overridden method, it will open its parent implementation. If the caret is in a class the method or on the class name, it will open the parent class.

That's all folks!

In the next article, we'll take a look at more Navigation shortcuts!

33 Comments Developer Phil

Recommend 8 Share



Join the discussion...

Maarten van Dillen • a year ago

My favorite is pressing the shift key twice. It pops up a Search Everywhere dialog.

9 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Felixwcf ➔ Maarten van Dillen • a year ago

Thankssssss!!!!!!!

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Suelen Goularte Carvalho • 3 years ago

Congratulations! Very nice your post, do you mind if a make a translate to my idiom with your refer blog? Thanks!

7 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Brand Lee • 2 years ago

cool tips but some flows.FYI.

Open Symbol, is "Ctrl+Shift+Alt+n", not the "alt+shift+n"

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Prathibha Nandini • 20 days ago

<https://developer.android.com/...>

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Ahmed Abo Qamar • 3 months ago

Thank you very helpful tips

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Erick Navarro • a year ago

Great post men! Is there any way to drag left and right the tabs? Thanks

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

于卫国 • a year ago

你好Philippe Breault, 这篇文章写得特别好, 我翻译成了中文, 地址: <http://blog.csdn.net/growth>

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Eduardo Cucharro • a year ago

Nice tips, thanks for sharing!

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Perihan Aykurt • a year ago

Thank you for sharing this very useful post!

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Romel Caro • 2 years ago

Good

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

vancexu • 2 years ago

Got cool tips here: open file and moving backforward

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Pilar Mass • 2 years ago

Do you know ho to comment code whit hot keys ? LIke ctrl+shift+c on Netbeans?

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



Josh → Pilar Mass • a year ago

cmd + / on a mac

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

wickedQuasar • 2 years ago

My favourite one : The up/down buttons on the side of most gaming mice (3+ button mouse) can b navigate forward/backward inside a document...

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Frank Harper • 2 years ago

Thanks for tips! Great for getting up to speed on AS.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›



VS • 2 years ago

Thank you for the article, it's really helpful! As a Visual Studio user, I am very used to clicking on a variable name, and navigating between all occurrences of that variable in a file by using Ctrl-Shift shortcuts. Is there a similar shortcut in Android Studio?

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Яанмаи Яомлї ➔ VS • 5 months ago

F3 would do

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

gsimons • 3 years ago

Nice list, but I am still trying to find out how I cycle through occurrences of a variable. If I have a gl and I initialise it somewhere, and use it in a different method again, how would I easily cycle through locations?

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

wickedQuasar ➔ gsimons • 2 years ago

select the entire variable and then press alt + F3 (search will open)...prssing F3 will now take various occurences..you may now close the search bar that opened earlier, it won't matter....

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Adam VanWert • 3 years ago

Hi. I'm struggling with moving views in the GUI of Android Studio. I would like to move them by dr they keep getting attached to or aligned with other objects so then they are tethered to the other obj makes moving them independently difficult. I know I can use the properties window to manually se position, but do you know of a way to drag objects without them getting tethered to other objects? I something like in PowerPoint where the objects can be freely moved? Thanks in advance for any tips

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Joemarie Comeros Amparo • 3 years ago

What is CTRL + SHIFT + O in Android Studio? Thnks

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Adnan Chohdry ➔ Joemarie Comeros Amparo • 3 years ago

There is no alternative, but you set adding imports on the fly. So it automatically handles it.

<http://stackoverflow.com/quest...>

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›



palimad • 3 years ago

CTRL+ALT+left, CTRL+ALT+right doesn't work dammit

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

phila ➔ palimad • 3 years ago

it's probably not doing what you expect it to do - it moves between the files based on definitio for example if you CTRL+click on a method name, CTRL+ALT+left&right move you between doesn't move between the tabs (you need the mouse for this, unfortunately)

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Maor Hadad ➔ phila • 2 years ago

its turn around my screen display (on window)

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Marc-Antoine Sauve → phila • 3 years ago

You can use CTRL + TAB to cycle through the recently used tabs that are still open.

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

phila → Marc-Antoine Sauve • 3 years ago

CTRL + TAB doesn't cycle through the tabs, it opens the switcher, which allow select a particular opened file using up & down arrows while you've still got C' there's a difference...

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

hoangtranwork • 3 years ago

wow, I'm a fan of IDEA too, and I didn't know about the LineNumber/OpenClass/File combination tried it. Thanks alot :)

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

CJ • 3 years ago

Thanks! Good points! Being used to Visual Studio one of the things I really - REALLY - miss is Alt-I taking me to the previous/next error in the current file. Is that possible in Android Studio?

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Jonah Wong → CJ • 3 years ago

Try Shift-F2/F2 for previous/next error :)

2 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Ishaankhan Pathan → Jonah Wong • 4 months ago

Thanks was looking for this since a long time

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

Konstantin Konopko • 2 years ago

How to back to the prev position like Eclipse ALT+LEFT?

^ | v • Reply • Share ›

ALSO ON DEVELOPER PHIL

Parcelable vs Serializable

37 comments • 3 years ago •

JohnEricksen — Philippe, thanks for the great article. I've linked to this from my project Parceler (http://parceler.org) which combines the simplicity of ...

Android Studio Tips Of the Day - Roundup #4

7 comments • 2 years ago •

Philippe Breault — I uploaded it a bit too fast and made the previous post point to #2 instead of #3. It's fixed now. Here is the url: ...

Android Studio Tips Of the Day - Roundup #3

9 comments • 2 years ago •

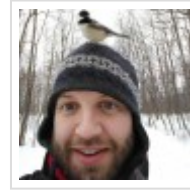
genfa — Many thanks for all this tips. I was looking for the shortcut to have help on the selected class (in visual studio), but nothing found :|

Android Studio Tips Of the Day – Roundup #2

21 comments • 2 years ago •

naiyujun — Tips are useful. Cool job, and I

About Me



Hey there! My name is Philippe Breault, I am a software developer and Google Developer

Expert living in Montréal (Canada).

Welcome to my blog, enjoy your stay!

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