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MAY 2, 2020 / #VIM

7 Vim Tips That Changed My Life (With Demo)



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Hi, fellow coders! You may have heard of the Vim code editor before, or even used it a bit.

There are plenty of resources out there that cover the basics of Vim and I don't want to just do another rewrite of those here. Instead, I want to share some quick tips that I've learned from others while using Vim full time at work.

These are tiny things that you can learn quickly that will make a big difference in your day-to-day work in Vim. They'd definitely made my life easier.

Remember: Vim comes pre-installed on Mac and Linux. You just need to open up your terminal and type "vim" in the command prompt, and you'll open Vim. If you have a Windows computer, [follow these instructions to install Vim on your PC](#).

Before we begin

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- [OpenVim](#) - Interactive Vim Tutorial
- vimtutor - this is an interactive command line tutorial that's available and installed on Macs and some Linux distros. Just type `vimtutor` in your terminal
- [VimAdventures](#) - First couple of levels are free, and if you like the format, and the full license is \$25

If you like Vim but it's too much to run it on its own, install a Vim extension for your favourite editor, like VS Code or Sublime or any other. That way you get to use the quick actions and shortcuts of Vim and a friendlier interface you're more used to.

One important realization I had about learning and working with Vim: you don't need to master everything (which is practically impossible anyway) to start using it.

Once you figure out the basics, every time you have a question or a block throughout your workday, write it down, and then go through that list and search the Internet for how to do that in Vim.

This way, you will incrementally fill any gaps you might have and will become better with each new little thing you add to your repertoire (these micro-improvements will be similar to the tips in this article below).

Now let's proceed to the fun stuff – the tips and tricks. You don't have to have any Vim plugins installed to take advantage of these.

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1

at correct indentation

Before I learned this, I used to jump on a new line and go to insert mode, TAB to the right indentation and start typing code. With this little trick, you won't have to do all the extra tabbing, it will just place you in insert mode at the right indentation.

RECIPE: `s` (SHIFT+s)

DEMO:

```
-- func (ids Identities) search(depth int, id Identity) Provider {
10 >> pat = strings.ToLower(strings.TrimPrefix(filepath.ToSlash(pat), "/"))
9 >> return PathIdentity{Type: typ, Path: pat}
8 }
7
6 // Identities stores identity providers.
5 type Identities map[Identity]Provider
4
3 func (ids Identities) search(depth int, id Identity) Provider {
2
1 >> if v, found := ids[id.Identity()]; found {
+ 32 █
1 >> >> return v
2 >> }
3
4 >> depth++
5
6 >> // There may be infinite recursion in templates.
7 >> if depth > 100 {
8 >> >> // Bail out.
9 }
```

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NORMAL +2 ~0 -0 ↵master > <dentity.go[+] go utf-8[unix] 20% ↵ 32/159 ln : 1 W:2(L10)

2. Resize windows automatically

Very often we do something with windows inside Vim that causes them to be resized incorrectly, sometimes one being way too wide and the other way too narrow.

The easiest way to see that effect is to open 3 windows in one Vim tab and resize the terminal window in which you opened Vim.

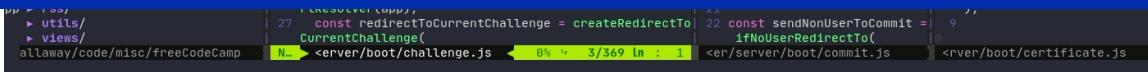
You want to resize the windows to all be the same size, with available space evenly distributed. Good news is, you don't have to do it manually.

RECIPE: `CTRL+w` =

The combination of CTRL+w, followed by pressing the equals sign key will equalize the windows.

DEMO:

```
[No Name] | v/vslugs.js | v/index.js | a/s/m/about.js | a/s/b/certificate.js | a/s/b/commit.js | a/s/b/challenge.js | buffer  
.. (up a dir) | 2 /**  
d, kallaway/code/misc/freeCodeCamp/ 1 *  
v api-server/ 3 Any ref to fixCompletedChallengesItem should be re-  
▶ common/ moved post  
▶ public/ 1 * a db migration to fix all completedChallenges  
v server/ 2 *  
v boot/ 3 */  
a-extend-built-ins.js 4 import { Observable } from 'rx';  
a-increase-listeners.js 5 import { isEmpty, pick, omit, find, uniqBy, last } fr-  
authentication.js om 'lodash';  
St certificate.js 6 import debug from 'debug';  
challenge.js 7 import dedent from 'dedent';  
ro commit.js 8 import { ObjectID } from 'mongodb';  
donate.js 9 import isNumeric from 'validator/lib/isNumeric';  
/u explorer.js 10 import isURL from 'validator/lib/isURL';  
news.js 11  
Ma randomAPIs.js 12 import { homeLocation } from '../../../../../config/env';  
ck restAPI.js 13  
nt sentry-debug.js 14 import { ifNoUserSend } from '../../../../../utils/middleware';  
'; settings.js 15 import { dasherize } from '../../../../../utils/slugs';  
t-wiki.js 16 import _pathMigrations from './resources/pathMigrati-  
rt user.js on.json';  
z-not-found.js 17 import { fixCompletedChallengeItem } from '../../../../../comm-  
on/utils';  
1 import { from 'Lodash';  
1 import { Observable } from 'rx';  
1 *  
1 * X*  
2 import debugFactory from 'd-  
ebug';  
3 import dedent from 'dedent'  
4 ,  
5 import { homeLocation } fro-  
m '../../../../../config/env';  
6  
7 import nonprofits from '../../../../../config/mis-  
c';  
8 import { commitGoals, compl-  
eteCommitments } from '../../../../../com-  
mits/commits';  
9  
10 import { unDasherize } from '../../../../../utils/slugs';  
11  
12 import { observeQuery, save 28  
Instance } from '../../../../../utils/r-  
x';  
13  
1 const log = debug('fcc:ce  
ification');
```

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3. Jump to the matching bracket/brace

With your cursor on a square [or round (bracket or a curly brace {, press % (SHIFT+5) to jump to its matching symbol. Press it again to jump back (toggle between them).

```
if (condition) {
    // code
}
// If your cursor was on {, and you pressed %, you'd jump to }
```

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DEMO:

```

+ 5
4 import qs from 'query-string';
3
2 // add rx methods to express
1 export default function() {
28   return function expressExtensions(req, res, next) {
1   res.redirectWithFlash = uri => {
2     const flash = req.flash();
3     res.redirect(
4       `${uri}?${qs.stringify(
5         { messages: qs.stringify(flash, { arrayFormat: 'index' }) },
6         { arrayFormat: 'index' }
7       )}`);
8   };
9 }
10 res.sendFlash = (type, message) => {
11   if (type && message) {
12     req.flash(type, message);
13   }
14   return res.json(req.flash());
15 };
16 next();
17 }
18 }

```

jk

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NORMAL ➤ +15 ~0 -0 ↵master ▶ api-server/server/middlewares/express-extensions.js[+]

javascript.jsx ▶ utf-8[unix] 52%

4. Indent/Unindent a line or multiple lines

```

>> - indents a line
<< - unindents a line

```

When you have multiple lines selected (in VISUAL LINE mode), you only need to press `>` or `<` once to indent or unindent the lines (as shown in demo below)

It doesn't matter where your cursor is positioned in the line when indenting - it will still work. After indent is done, cursor is auto-

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DEMO:

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3 challengeUrlResolver
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5. Fix indentation in the whole file

Start in the top of a file (to get there, press `gg` anywhere in the file.).

Then press `=G`, and Vim will fix the indentation in the whole file. If you

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RECIPE: `=G`

Press the equals sign, followed by SHIFT+G

DEMO:

```
[No Name] | c/content.go | c/compare.go | h/test_helpers.go | i/identity.go+ buffers
1 package identity
2
3 import (
4   "path/filepath"
5   "strings"
6   "sync"
7   "sync/atomic"
8 )
9 // NewIdentityManager creates a new Manager starting at id.
10 func NewManager(id Provider) Manager {
11   return &identityManager{
12     Provider: id,
13     ids:      Identities{id.GetIdentity(): id},
14   }
15 }
16
17 // newPathIdentity creates a new Identity with the two identifiers
18 // type and path.
19 func newPathIdentity(typ, pat string) PathIdentity {
20   pat = strings.ToLower(strings.TrimPrefix(filepath.ToSlash(pat), "/"))
21   return PathIdentity{Type: typ, Path: pat}
22 }
23
24 // Identities stores identity providers.
25 type Identities map[Identity]Provider
26
27 func (ids Identities) search(depth int, id Identity) Provider {
28
29   if v, found := ids[id.GetIdentity()]; found {
30     return v
31   }
32
33   depth++
34
35   // There may be infinite recursion in templates.
36   if depth > 100 {
37     // Bail out.
38     return nil
39   }
40
41   for _, v := range ids {
42     switch t := v.(type) {
43     case IdentitiesProvider:
44       if nested := t.GetIdentities().search(depth, id); nested != nil {
45         return nested
46       }
47     }
48   }
49 }
50
51 NORMAL +0 ~0 -0 ↵master > <identity.go[+]    go  utf-8[unix]  0% ↵  1/157 ln : 9  W:2(L10)
```

6. Basics of working with tabs

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don't know of any other editor that supports this (but I'm sure there is a way to do it elsewhere). For example, I like to keep my code related files in my main tab, and in another tab: README with a TODO list and a place I can jot down further ideas.

To write the commands to work with tabs, you will need to be in command mode. To start writing the command, press `:` and type. The command will show up in the left bottom corner of the editor as you are typing. Press enter to execute.

RECIPE:

`:tabnew` creates a new tab

`gt` - go to next tab

`gT` - go to previous tab

`:tabo` - close all other tabs besides the active one

DEMO:

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```
[No Name] i/identity.go
> dochelper/
> examples/
> helpers/
> htesting/
> hugofs/
> hugolib/
> identity/
  identity.go
  identity_test.go
> langs/
```

```
10 >>> ids:      Identities{id.GetIdentity(): id},
9 >>> }
8 }
7
6 // NewPathIdentity creates a new Identity with the two identifiers
5 // type and path.
4 func NewPathIdentity(typ, pat string) PathIdentity {
3 >> pat = strings.ToLower(strings.TrimPrefix(filepath.ToSlash(pat), "/"))
2 >>> return PathIdentity{Type: typ, Path: pat}
```

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7. How to quickly go back to a previous file

Often, when you edit a file with code, you open another one in the same window. Then it's not so easy to come back to the one you just worked on. You could list buffers and navigate to the previous one but you need to remember its name for that and spend your precious time. Vim users don't like to spend too much time on actions. :) So you can use **CTRL+o** for this.

All it does is that it finds a previous position of your cursor - and if it happened to be in a different file (the one you just lost by opening a

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```

[No Name] i/identity.go t/c/init.go |
22
21 >> // There may be infinite recursion in templates.
20 >> if depth > 100 {
19 >>> // Bail out.
18 >>> return nil
17 >>
16
15 >> for _, v := range ids {
14 >>> switch t := v.(type) {
13 >>> case IdentitiesProvider:
12 >>>> if nested := t.GetIdentities().search(depth, id); nested != nil {
11 >>>>> return nested
10 >>>>
9 >>>
8 >>
7 >> return nil
6 }
5
4 // IdentitiesProvider provides all Identities.
3 type IdentitiesProvider interface {
2 >> GetIdentities() Identities
1 }

57
1 // Identity represents an thing that can provide an identify. This can be
2 // any Go type, but the Identity returned by GetIdentify must be hashable.
3 type Identity interface {
4 >> Provider
5 >> Name() string
6 }
7
8 // Manager manages identities, and is itself a Provider of Identity.
9 type Manager interface {
10 >> IdentitiesProvider
11 >> Provider
NORMAL > +0 ~0 -0 ./master > identity/identity.go go utf-8[unix] 36% 57/157 ln : 1 W:2(L10)

```

Thank you for reading and I hope these tips serve you well!

? If you want to follow my adventures, [here's my Twitter](#) :)

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