



# FIRST STEPS WITH EMACS

PART OF THE ESS-INTRO SERIES

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## The Perception of Emacs



### Intimidated?

Decades of history.

Bazillion tutorials.

*Opinionated* views.


### But fear not!

*Incremental use*  
works.

Learn a few steps.  
Master them.

Learn some more.

# EMACS: BASICS MOVEMENT

A screenshot of the Emacs editor window titled "TUTORIAL". The window has a menu bar with "File", "Edit", "Options", "Buffers", "Tools", "Virtual Envs", and "Help". The text inside the window is as follows:

```
Emacs tutorial. See end for copying conditions.

NOTICE: The main purpose of the Emacs tutorial is to teach you
the most important standard Emacs commands (key bindings).
However, your Emacs has been customized by changing some of
these basic editing commands, so it doesn't correspond to the
tutorial. We have inserted colored notices where the altered
commands have been introduced. [More]

Emacs commands generally involve the CONTROL key (sometimes labeled
CTRL or CTL) or the META key (sometimes labeled EDIT or ALT). Rather than
write that in full each time, we'll use the following abbreviations:

C-<chr> means hold the CONTROL key while typing the character <chr>
Thus, C-f would be: hold the CONTROL key and type f.
M-<chr> means hold the META or EDIT or ALT key down while typing <chr>.
If there is no META, EDIT or ALT key, instead press and release the
ESC key and then type <chr>. We write <ESC> for the ESC key.

Important note: to end the Emacs session, type C-x C-c. (Two characters.)
To quit a partially entered command, type C-g.
To stop the tutorial, type C-x k, then <Return> at the prompt.
The characters ">>" at the left margin indicate directions for you to
try using a command. For instance:

[Middle of page left blank for didactic purposes. Text continues below]

>> Now type C-v (View next screen) to scroll down in the tutorial.
    (go ahead, do it by holding down the CONTROL key while typing v).
    From now on, please do this whenever you reach the end of the screen.
```

At the bottom of the window, a status bar shows: "-- TUTORIAL Top of 48k (1.0) (Fundamental EditorConfig) 4:37PM 0.60 Mail".

A really good  
builtin resource

The Emacs  
Tutorial

C-h t

Type **Ctrl** and  
then type **t**.

## Key Advantages

- Particular uses *carry from one mode to another*
- There are too many to enumerate but ...
- ... (maybe my) favourite example
  - **C-space** to mark a starting
  - Navigate to end
  - **M-x comment-region** will uncomment the regions
  - In **any programming language** or **text format**
- Also cool: Prefix the same with **C-u** (“undo”) to uncomment

## More Key Advantages

- Indentation is always sensitive to the programming language
- **M-q** formats (“flows”) indents a paragraph
- **C-M-\** indents a region in the current language
- Very powerful ‘undo’ feature
- Rectangular regions (could be a five-mi presentation in itself)
- ‘Record’ key sequence to ‘replay’ for ad-hoc automation (ditto)
- Named Register to hold paste-able content or positions (ditto)

## This is a semi-random collection

- Awesome Emacs <https://github.com/emacs-tw/awesome-emacs>
- Collection of resources (2011)  
<https://batsov.com/articles/2011/11/30/the-ultimate-collection-of-emacs-resources/>
- Opinionated Emacs Guide  
<https://m00natic.github.io/emacs/emacs-wiki.html>
- Batteries Included <https://karthinks.com/software/batteries-included-with-emacs/>
- More Batteries Included <https://karthinks.com/software/more-batteries-included-with-emacs/>
- EmacsLife Video List <https://emacslife.com/videos.html>

## Images and Logos

- ESS logo from the ESS Project site hosted by the R Project at <https://ess.r-project.org>
- Emacs Organ image from <http://anagilemind.net/2015/07/31/a-few-more-agile-related-memes/ah-finally-got-my-emacs-setup-just-how-i-like-it-v2/>