

# VI/VIM Essential Command Reference

By Donald Raymond  
and Mary Piper

## Basic Controls & Commands

**Esc** - Basic command mode (Default mode)

**i** - Insert mode (for inserting text)

**gg/G** - Move to top/bottom of file

**0/\$** - Move to begin/end of line

**w/b** - Move to next/previous word

**dw/dd** - Delete word/line

**u** - Undo

**Ctrl + u** - Redo

**:w file** - Write *file*

**:wq** - Write and quit (:wq! to enforce)

**:q!** - Quit without saving

## Navigation and Searching

**:n** - Move cursor to line *n*

**Ctrl + u/d** - Move down/up half page

**Ctrl + f/b** - Move down/up a full page

**e** - Move to end of word

**h/j/k/l** - Move cursor left/down/up/right

**H/M/L** - Jump to top/middle/bottom of page

**:n** - Move cursor to line *n*

**fn** - Search forward for next *n*

**/pattern ?pattern** - Search *pattern* forward/back

**n/N** - Next/previous occurrence of search pattern

**#** - Search for word under cursor

**:help topic** - Show documentation for *topic*

## Buffers & Windows

**:ls** or **:files** - Display list of opened files

**:b n** - Open file *n* in current window

**:bdn** - Delete file *#n* from buffer

**:next/previous** - Move to next/previous file

**:first/last** - Switch to first/last file

**:e!** - Reload current file

**Ctrl + wn** or **:new** - New empty window

**Ctrl + ws** or **:sp** - Split window horizontally

**Ctrl + wv** or **:vsp** - Split window vertically

**Ctrl + wc** or **:close** - Close window

**Ctrl + wo** or **:only** - Close all but current window

**Ctrl + ww** - Jump to next window

**Ctrl + w[hjkl]** - Move window focus

**Ctrl + w[HJKL]** - Move window

**:resize/vertical resize +n** - Resize window (Hor/ver)

## Edit and Save files

**:e filename** - Edit a new file (add to buffer)

**:enew** - New empty file

**:read !command** - Insert *command* output

**:x** or **ZZ** - Save and quit if file was changed

**:w >> file2** - Append contents of file to *file2*

**.** - Repeat last command

**V/v** - Visual mode for selecting lines/char

**:%s/search/replace/gc** - Search and replace

**:f newname** - Change file name to *newname*

**i/a** - Insert text before/after char

**I/A** - Insert text at start/end of line

**O/o** - Insert new line above/below cursor

**:command** - Execute *command* in vi

**r/cw/cc** - Replace char/word/line

**R** - Replace text (typeover)

**s/S** - Delete char/line and insert text

**~/g~~** - Reverse case of char/line

## Deleting & Copying Text

**x/X** - Delete current/previous char

**nd** - Delete line *#n*

**D** or **d\$** - Delete rest of line

**d0** - Delete from here to beginning of line

**Y** or **yy** - Copy to register

**y0/y\$** - Copy to beginning/end of line

**p/P** - Paste register after/before cursor

## Other Useful Commands

**view file** - Open *file* in read-only mode

**:sh** - open shell (exit to re-enter vi)

**: !command** - Run system *command* in VI

**:e .** - Browse a directory and display file explorer

**:cd path/to/dir** - Change directory

**:noh** - Disable search highlighting

**:Sex** - Split window and show file explorer (Hor)

**:Sex!** - Split window and show file explorer (Ver)

**vimdiff file1 file2** - Compare two files

**nl** - Move cursor to column *n*

**\*** - Go to next occurrence of word under cursor

**nG** - Go to line *n*