


Filling and Justification

Description	Keystroke	Function	Note
Filling, Justification, Position (and navigation) Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filling Text Text Justification Center text horizontally 	Under some conditions, and for editing some type of files, it may be useful to see the horizontal ruler above the window of a buffer. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ruler-mode provides this functionality. You can also use a vertical line highlighting a specific column: see ↶ Highlight Emacs filling uses several variables identifying the column where text must wrap. The main variable is the ‘fill-column’ variable. But it’s not the only one. For buffer used to show and edit Lisp or Emacs Lisp code, the emacs-lisp-docstring-fill-column controls text wrapping inside Lisp docstrings. The values of the relevant fill wrapping controlling column is shown by the pel-show-fill-colum command, shown below.		
Last updated on:	2025-08-27		
Open this PDF file. See also: ↶ Help/Info	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <f11> t f <f1> <f11> t j <f1> 	(pel-help-pdf &optional OPEN-WEB-PAGE)	Open the ↶ Filling/Justification local PDF. If the prefix argument (like C–u or M––) is used, then it opens the remote GitHub hosted raw PDF instead. If the pel-flip-help-pdf-arg user-option is set it’s the other way around.
Customize Emacs file and justification control See also: ↶ Customize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <f11> t f <f3> <f11> t j <f3> 	(pel-customize-library &optional OTHER-WINDOW)	Customize Emacs fill and justification control.
Show the ruler See also: ↶ Highlight	<f11> b -	(ruler-mode &optional ARG)	Toggle display of ruler in header line (Ruler mode) in window(s) of current buffer. With a prefix argument, enable Ruler mode if ARG is positive, disable it otherwise.
Example of the ruler in terminal mode showing the ruler-mode markers ➡➡ ... and the point (cursor) ➡➡	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ruler markers are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current cursor position ! Marks every 5 positions. # Current <i>comment-column</i> value, set by C–x ; It controls where the cursor goes when creating a new comment on a line. ¶ Current <i>fill-column</i> value, set by C–x f, controls where the cursor wraps. G Current <i>goal-column</i> value, controlled by C–x C–n. The horizontal position when going up and down lines via C–p and C–n. If nil, its G symbol will not show on the ruler and it will not have any impact on the navigation commands. See the information about the set-goal-column command in the navigation table. 		
Show the values of the fill columns	<f11> t f ?	(pel-show-fill-columns)	Display values of relevant user-options and variables controlling text fill and justification inside a special “pel-fill-info” buffer. In that buffer the user-options and variable names are buttons providing access to more information.]
Toggle ruler line on fill column See also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↶ Highlight ↶ Spell Checking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <f11> h \ <f11> <f5> \ <f11> 8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (fci-mode &optional ARG) 	Toggle a vertical ruler line shown at the buffer’s fill-column. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Emacs < 27.1: requires the fill-column-indicator external package activated by PEL use-fill-column-indicator user option set to t. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> fci-mode interferes with pop-up menu displays in terminal-mode, at least with the one used by flyspell-correct-word-before-point: the menu lines become all jagged, they do not line up vertically. The problem does not affect Emacs running in graphics mode. For Emacs >= 27.1: the built-in display-fill-column-indicator-mode is used.
Filling Text See also: ↶ Text Modes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For fill and refill mode to work properly on text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sentences must be separated by 2 spaces (unless <i>sentence-end-double-space</i> is t): use <f11> t m s to change this. Paragraphs must be separated by 1 empty line. Identify major modes where the auto-fill-mode is automatically activated in the pel-modes-activating-auto-fill-mode user-option. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access the relevant customization buffer with <f11> t <f2> 		
Toggle end of sentence space count	<f11> t m s	(pel-toggle-sentence-end)	Toggle the value of sentence-end-double-space variable to change the number of required spaces after a period to identify at the end of a sentence in text: from 2 (the default) to 1 and vice-versa.
Set Fill Column	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C–x f <f11> t f c 	(set-fill-column ARG)	When no prefix value: prompts for column. If with C–u prefix: use current column. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If with numeric prefix value: use that value.
Toggle auto-fill mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <f11> t f a <f11> RET 	(auto-fill-mode &optional ARG)	Toggle automatic line breaking (Auto Fill mode). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With prefix argument, enable Auto Fill mode if prefix argument is positive, and disable it otherwise. When Auto Fill mode is enabled, inserting a space at a column beyond ‘current-fill-column’ automatically breaks the line at a previous space.
Toggle auto fill inside comments only	<f11> t f ;	(pel-auto-fill-only-comments)	Toggle the comment-auto-fill-only-comments variable to control whether filling is done everywhere or only inside the comments.
Togge refill mode	<f11> t f f	(refill-mode &optional ARG)	Toggle automatic refilling (Refill mode). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With a prefix argument ARG, enable Refill mode if ARG is positive, and disable it otherwise. Refill mode is a buffer-local minor mode. When enabled, the current paragraph is refilled as you edit. Self-inserting characters only cause refilling if they would cause auto-filling.
Set fill prefix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C–x . <f11> t f . 	(set-fill-prefix)	Set the fill prefix to the current line up to point. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filling expects lines to start with the fill prefix and reinserts the fill prefix in each resulting line. The fill prefix is then inserted before any character typed in the line.
Fill Lisp code section	<f11> t f l	(lisp-fill-paragraph &optional JUSTIFY)	Like M–q , but handle Emacs Lisp comments and docstrings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If any of the current line is a comment, fill the comment or the paragraph of it that point is in, preserving the comment’s indentation and initial semicolons. Temporarily binds ‘fill-column’ to ‘emacs-lisp-docstring-fill-column’ which is used to identify the fill column for Emacs Lisp docstring.
Fill region	<f11> t f r	(fill-region FROM TO &optional JUSTIFY NOSQUEEZE TO-EOP)	Fill each of the paragraphs in the region. The ‘fill-column’ variable controls the width. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A prefix arg means justify as well.
Fill region as one paragraph	<f11> t f q	(fill-region-as-paragraph FROM TO &optional JUSTIFY NOSQUEEZE SQUEEZE-AFTER)	Fill the region as one paragraph. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It removes any paragraph breaks in the region and extra newlines at the end, indents and fills lines between the margins given by the ‘current-left-margin’ and ‘current-fill-column’ functions. In most cases, the variable ‘fill-column’ controls the width. It leaves point at the beginning of the line following the paragraph. Normally performs justification according to the ‘current-justification’ function, but with a prefix arg, does full justification instead. If ‘sentence-end-double-space’ is non-nil, then period followed by one space does not end a sentence, so don’t break a line there. You can change this using the (pel-toggle-sentence-end) bound to <f11> t m s.
Fill current paragraph <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refill also properly refill a multi-line comment and strings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> M–q <f11> t f p 	(fill-paragraph &optional JUSTIFY REGION)	Fill paragraph at or after point. To justify as well: C–u M–q <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In refill mode, refill is done automatically. In auto-fill mode, it’s done on reaching fill column. The M–q key is also used in major modes for programming languages but is mapped to a different command for several of them.
Fill region, each indentation starts a new “paragraph”	<f11> t f i	(fill-individual-paragraphs MIN MAX &optional JUSTIFY CITATION-REGEXP)	Fill paragraphs of uniform indentation within the region. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This command divides the region into “paragraphs”, treating every change in indentation level or prefix as a paragraph boundary, then fills each paragraph using its indentation level as the fill prefix.
Fill region considering only paragraph-separator lines as starting a new paragraph	<f11> t f n	(fill-nonuniform-paragraphs MIN MAX &optional JUSTIFYF CITATION-REGEXP)	Fill paragraphs within the region, allowing varying indentation within each. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This command divides the region into “paragraphs”, only at paragraph-separator lines, then fills each paragraph using as the fill prefix the smallest indentation of any line in the paragraph.

Description	Keystroke	Function	Note
Text Justification See also: ⓘ Enriched Text	Text justification is normally used when enriched text support is activated via the enriched-mode. <ul style="list-style-type: none">The standard Emacs key- sequences listed below are only available in enriched-mode. The PEL key-sequences are always available.		
Toggle Enriched Text Mode See also: ⓘ Text Modes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><f11> t e e<f11> t m e	(enriched-mode &optional ARG)	Minor mode for editing text/enriched files. <ul style="list-style-type: none">These are files with embedded formatting information in the MIME standard text/enriched format.
Set justification - full (both)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">M-j b	(set-justification-full B E)	Make paragraphs in the region fully justified. <ul style="list-style-type: none">This makes lines flush on both margins by inserting spaces between words.If the mark is not active, this applies to the current paragraph.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><f11> t j f		
Set justification - left	<ul style="list-style-type: none">M-j l	(set-justification-left B E)	Make paragraphs in the region left-justified. <ul style="list-style-type: none">This means they are flush at the left margin and ragged on the right.If the mark is not active, this applies to the current paragraph.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><f11> t j l		
Set justification - center	<ul style="list-style-type: none">M-j cM-S	(set-justification-center B E)	Make paragraphs in the region centered. <ul style="list-style-type: none">If the mark is not active, this applies to the current paragraph.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><f11> t j c		
Set justification - right	<ul style="list-style-type: none">M-j r	(set-justification-right B E)	Make paragraphs in the region right-justified. <ul style="list-style-type: none">This means they are flush at the right margin and ragged on the left.If the mark is not active, this applies to the current paragraph.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><f11> t j r		
Set justification - none (un-justify)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">M-j u	(set-justification-none B E)	Disable automatic filling for paragraphs in the region. <ul style="list-style-type: none">If the mark is not active, this applies to the current paragraph.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><f11> t j u		
Centering	The following commands center text horizontally.		
Center paragraph	M-o M-S	(center-paragraph)	Center each nonblank line in the paragraph at or after point.
Center line	M-o M-s	(center-line &optional NLINES)	Center the line point is on, within the width specified by ‘fill-column’. <ul style="list-style-type: none">It adjusts the indentation so that it equals the distance between the end of the text and ‘fill-column’.With numeric prefix argument NLINES: centres that many lines.  The %-- key is normally bound here in graphics mode. PEL re-assigns it.

Filling and Justification — References

Operation	Keystroke
Text Filling	
GNU Emacs Lisp - Text - Filling	
GNU Emacs Lisp - Text - Auto Filling	
GNU Emacs Lisp - Text - Adaptive Filling	
GNU Emacs Lisp - Text - Margins	
Emacs hard wrap lines	
Emacs wiki - Ruler Mode	
Emacs wiki - refilling mode	
Emacs wiki - Auto Fill Mode	
How to set multiline comments - StackOverflow	
Line Wraps	
Truncate Lines @ EmacsWiki	Describes how to set/disable line wrapping globally. Also explains how to control it for a given mode.
Line Wrap @ EmacsWiki	Describes various modes: AutoFillMode, LongLines, VisualLineMode
longlines-mode @ emacs horror	Discuss difference between longlines-mode and visual-line-mode
ErgoEmacs: Show Cursor Position	Xah Lee's ErgoEmacs web site has a picture of the ruler at the top of this page. I did not see one inside Emacs manuals (yet, let me know if you find one).