

Nano/Basics Guide

From Gentoo Wiki

Opening and creating files

For opening and creating files type:

```
root # nano filename
```

Nano is a modeless editor so you can start typing immediately to insert text. If you are editing a configuration file like `/etc/fstab` use the `-w` switch to disable wrapping on long lines as it might render the configuration file unparseable by whatever tools depend on it. For example:

```
root # nano -w /etc/fstab
```

Warning

It is very, very important that you use the `-w` switch when opening a config file. Failure to do so may keep your system from booting or cause other bad things.

Saving and exiting

If you want to save the changes you've made, press `Ctrl` + `O`. To exit nano, type `Ctrl` + `X`. If you ask nano to exit from a modified file, it will ask you if you want to save it. Just press `N` in case you don't, or `Y` in case you do. It will then ask you for a filename. Just type it in and press `Enter`.

If you accidentally confirmed that you want to save the file but you actually don't, you can always cancel by pressing `Ctrl` + `C` when you're prompted for a filename.

Cutting and pasting

To cut a single line, you use `Ctrl` + `K` (hold down `Ctrl` and then press `K`). The line disappears. To paste it, you simply move the cursor to where you want to paste it and punch `Ctrl` + `U`. The line reappears. To move multiple lines, simply cut them with

several **Ctrl** + **K** in a row, then paste them with a single **Ctrl** + **U**. The whole paragraph appears wherever you want it.

If you need a little more fine-grained control, then you have to mark the text. Move the cursor to the beginning of the text you want to cut.

Hit **Ctrl** + **6** (or **Alt** + **A**). Now move your cursor to the end of the text you want to cut: the marked text gets highlighted. If you need to cancel your text marking, simply hit **Ctrl** + **6** again.

Press **Ctrl** + **K** to cut the marked text. Use **Ctrl** + **U** to paste it.

Searching for text

Searching for a string is easy as long as you think "*Where's*" instead of "*Search*". Simply hit **Ctrl** + **W**, type in your search string, and press **Enter**. To search for the same string again, hit **Alt** + **W**.

Note

In nano's help texts the **Ctrl** is represented by a caret (^), so **Ctrl** + **W** is shown as ^W, and so on. The **Alt** key is represented by an M (from "Meta"), so **Alt** + **W** is shown as M-W.

More options

If you're interested in tweaking nano, be sure to read `/etc/nanorc`.