GNU Emacs Survival Card

for version 24

In the following, C-z means hit the 'z' key while holding down the *Ctrl* key. M-z means hit the 'z' key while hitting the *Meta* (labeled *Alt* on some keyboards) or after hitting *Esc* key.

Running Emacs

To enter GNU Emacs, just type its name: `emacs`. Emacs divides the frame into several areas: menu line, buffer area with the edited text, mode line describing the buffer in the window above it, and a minibuffer/echo area in the last line.

C-x C-c	quit Emacs
C-x C-f	edit file; this command uses the minibuffer to read the file name; use this to create new files by entering the name of the new file
C-x C-s	save the file
C-x k	kill a buffer
C-g	in most context: cancel, stop, abort partially typed or executing command
C-x u	undo

Moving About

C-l	scroll current line to center of window
C-x b	switch to another buffer
M-<	move to beginning of buffer
M->	move to end of buffer
M-g M-g	go to a given line number

Multiple Windows

C-x 0	remove the current window from the display
C-x 1	make active window the only window
C-x 2	split window horizontally
C-x 3	split window vertically
C-x o	move to other window

Regions

Emacs defines a 'region' as the space between the *mark* and the *point*. A mark is set with C-*space*. The point is at the cursor position.

M-h	mark entire paragraph
C-x h	mark entire buffer

Killing and Copying

C-w	kill region
M-w	copy region to kill-ring
C-k	kill from the cursor all the way to the end of the line
M-DEL	kill word
C-y	yank back the last kill (C-w C-y combination could be used to move text around)
M-y	replace last yank with previous kill

Searching

C-s	search for a string
C-r	search for a string backwards
RET	quit searching
M-C-s	regular expression search
M-C-r	reverse regular expression search

Use C-s or C-r again to repeat the search in either direction.

Tags

Tags tables files record locations of function and procedure definitions, global variables, data types and anything else convenient. To create a tags table file, type '`etags` *input_files*' as a shell command.

M-.	find a definition
C-u M-.	find next occurrence of definition
M-*	pop back to where M-. was last invoked
M-x tags-query-replace	run query-replace on all files recorded in tags table
M-,	continue last tags search or query-replace

Compiling

M-x compile	compile code in active window
C-c C-c	go to the next compiler error, when in the compile window or
C-x '	when in the window with source code

Dired, the Directory Editor

C-x d	invoke Dired
d	flag this file for deletion
~	flag all backup files for deletion
u	remove deletion flag
x	delete the files flagged for deletion
C	copy file
g	update the Dired buffer
f	visit the file described on the current line
s	switch between alphabetical date/time order

Reading and Sending Mail

M-x rmail	start reading mail
q	quit reading mail
h	show headers
d	mark the current message for deletion
x	remove all messages marked for deletion
C-x m	begin composing a message
C-c C-c	send the message and switch to another buffer
C-c C-f C-c	move to the 'CC' header field, creating one if there is none

Miscellaneous

M-q	fill paragraph
M-/	expand previous word dynamically
C-z	iconify (suspend) Emacs when running it under X or shell, respectively
M-x revert-buffer	replace the text being edited with the text of the file on disk

Query Replace

`M-%`	interactively search and replace
`M-C-%`	using regular expressions

Valid responses in query-replace mode are

`SPC`	replace this one, go on to next
`,`	replace this one, don't move
`DEL`	skip to next without replacing
`!`	replace all remaining matches
`^`	back up to the previous match
`RET`	exit query-replace
`C-r`	enter recursive edit (`M-C-c` to exit)

Regular Expressions

`.` (dot)	any single character except a newline
`*`	zero or more repeats
`+`	one or more repeats
`?`	zero or one repeat
`[...]`	denotes a class of character to match
`[^...]`	negates the class
`\`*c*	quote characters otherwise having a special meaning in regular expressions
`...|...|...`	matches one of the alternatives ("or")
`\( ... \)`	groups a series of pattern elements to a single element
`\`*n*	same text as *n*th group
`^`	matches at line beginning
`$`	matches at line end
`\w`	matches word-syntax character
`\W`	matches non-word-syntax character
`\<`	matches at word beginning
`\>`	matches at word end
`\b`	matches at word break
`\B`	matches at non-word break

Registers

`C-x r s`	save region in register
`C-x r i`	insert register contents into buffer
`C-x r SPC`	save value of point in register
`C-x r j`	jump to point saved in register

Rectangles

`C-x r r`	copy rectangle to register
`C-x r k`	kill rectangle
`C-x r y`	yank rectangle
`C-x r t`	prefix each line with a string
`C-x r o`	open rectangle, shifting text right
`C-x r c`	blank out rectangle

Shells

`M-x shell`	start a shell within Emacs
`M-!`	execute a shell command
`M-|`	run a shell command on the region
`C-u M-|`	filter region through a shell command

Spelling Check

`M-$`	check spelling of word at the cursor
`M-x ispell-region`	check spelling of all words in region
`M-x ispell-buffer`	check spelling of entire buffer

International Character Sets

`C-x RET C-\`	select and activate input method for the current buffer
`C-\`	enable or disable input method
`M-x list-input-methods`	show all input methods
`M-x set-language-environment`	specify principal language
`C-x RET c`	set coding system for next command
`M-x find-file-literally`	visit file with no conversion of any kind
`M-x list-coding-systems`	show all coding systems
`M-x prefer-coding-system`	choose preferred coding system

Keyboard Macros

`C-x (`	start defining a keyboard macro
`C-x )`	end keyboard macro definition
`C-x e`	execute last-defined keyboard macro
`C-u C-x (`	append to last keyboard macro
`M-x name-last-kbd-macro`	name last keyboard macro

Simple Customization

`M-x customize`	customize variables and faces

Getting Help

Emacs does command completion for you. Typing `M-x` *tab* or *space* gives a list of Emacs commands.

`C-h`	Emacs help
`C-h t`	run the Emacs tutorial
`C-h i`	enter Info, the documentation browser
`C-h a`	show commands matching a string (apropos)
`C-h k`	display documentation of the function invoked by keystroke

Emacs gets into different *modes*, each of which customizes Emacs for editing text of a particular sort. The mode line contains names of the current modes, in parentheses.

`C-h m`	get mode-specific information

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