

CLAUDE COMMAND REFERENCE

THE OPERATOR'S CHEAT SHEET

claude doesn't get dumber. your context gets heavy.
these are the commands that keep it light, grouped by
when you actually reach for them.

claude has a fixed **context window**. that's its working memory. every message, file, and tool call you add gets heavier to carry. the longer a session runs, the more it loses the thread, repeats itself, and ignores instructions you gave it early. you don't fix that with a better prompt. you fix it by managing the weight.

THE THREE YOU'LL USE EVERY SESSION

01

/clear

new task, unrelated to the last. wipes the context to a blank slate. keeps your project memory. old session stays on disk.

02

/compact

same task, but it's getting sluggish. summarizes everything so far and continues from the summary instead of the full pile.

03

/model

saves money. plan with opus, switch to sonnet to build files. right-size the model for every task.

CONTEXT CONTROL

/clear

AT TASK BOUNDARIES

wipes the conversation to an empty context so nothing stale leaks into new work. your **CLAUDE.md** / **project memory is kept**. the old conversation stays on disk. pass a name to label it, e.g. `/clear billing-bug`, so you can find it in the resume picker later.

/compact

DEEP IN A LONG TASK

compresses the history into a dense summary and keeps going from it. steer what it keeps: `/compact keep the API contract decisions`. most heavy users run it every 20–30 min, or when usage passes ~80%. **CLAUDE.md**, skills, and memory files are preserved automatically.

/context

BEFORE IT BITES

shows a visual grid of what's eating your window: files, history, system prompts. check it instead of guessing why claude went sideways.

THE ONE RULE EVERYONE GETS WRONG

/clear when you switch to different work. **/compact** when you keep going on the same work. treating them as the same command is the single most common mistake, and it's why your sessions rot.

NAVIGATION — NEVER RE-EXPLAIN YOURSELF

/resume	pick up a previous session. no argument opens a picker; pass a name to jump straight there. also /continue.
/branch	fork the conversation at this point to try a different approach without destroying the working one. alias /fork.
/rewind	roll back code and/or conversation (or Esc Esc). pick "rewind code only" to undo file changes while keeping the discussion.

COST & PERFORMANCE — STOP OVERPAYING

/model	switch models mid-session. no argument opens a picker; press s to switch for this session only without changing your default.
/effort	slider for reasoning depth: low to medium to high to xhigh to max. drop it for trivial edits, raise it for hard problems.
/usage	see tokens and spend for the session. /cost is an alias for it. build intuition for what's expensive.

UTILITY — SMALL HABITS, BIG PAYOFF

/export	export the conversation as text. good for postmortems, docs, or handing a session to a teammate.
/copy	copy the last response. small, surprisingly handy.
/help	forgot what's available? type / alone to see every command in your session and filter by typing letters.

THE OPERATOR MINDSET

commands aren't free, they spend tokens too. the win isn't memorizing all 60. it's building three reflexes: clear at boundaries, compact when heavy, right-size the model. that's the difference between fighting the tool and operating it.

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go from running commands to building infrastructure. files not chats. skills not prompts.