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# FEA Model Build Cheat Sheet MSC Apex and MSC Nastran



#### View, Transform & Geometry Create/Edit



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View Man	View Manipulation (Mouse)		
Drag MMB	Rotates the model		
Drag RMB	Pans the model		
Drag MMI +LMB toget	Regular zoom. Zooms the model from/to center of screen		
Scroll whee	Scroll wheel zoom. Zooms the model from/to cursor location		
Click LMB + RMB togeth	Fit view. Fits the entire model contents into the viewport		
Hold dow LMB + RM together fo 400 ms	Fit isometric view. Fits the entire model contents into the viewpor AND orients the model into the default isometric view		
Drag LMB + RMB togeth	Window zoom. Lets you draw a rectangle to which you can zoom once you release your fingers from the mouse		
While dragg MMB if yo click LMB RMB	ng J Toggle pan/rotate. Lets you toggle between panning and rotating.		
RMB click	This launches the context menu.		

à.	Interactive Triad	
	View normal to plane	Click axis label
	Rotate about axis	Click axis
	View isometric orientation	Click ball

<u>Å</u>	Transform T	Tools

Transform Move or copy selected geometric components of a model to a new location and orientation (translation, rotation or mirror).



	Geometry Create Tools		
	Rectangle with 2 Points	Creates a rectangle by selecting two opposite vertices.	
$\mathbf{r}$	Polyline	Creates a rectangle by selecting two opposite vertices.	
	Center Point	Creates a circle sketch by specifying the center point and a point	
4	Cirlce	on its circumference.	
0 <mark>0</mark> 0	Ellipse	Defines an ellipse by specifying a center point and points on two axes.	
	Center Point Arc	Sketches an arc by specifying a center point and end points.	
	Fillet	Sketches an arc by specifying a center point and end points.	
×	Trim	Sketches an arc by specifying a center point and end points.	
	Project	Projects vertex, node, curve or surface entities onto the current sketch plane.	
	Rectangle with 3 Points	Creates a rectangle by selecting three vertices.	
A	Spline	Creates a spline with continuous curvature through selected points.	

₿	3 Points Circle	Creates a circle by specifying three points on its circumference.
	3 Points Arc	Creates an arc by specifying three points along the arc.
0	Point	Defines points by specifying their locations.
	Chamfer	Creates a chamfer of a given length at a specified location.
X	Split	Splits a single sketch object into two objects at the selected point.
₿	Edit	Edits dimensions of an existing sketch.

\$	Geometry Edit Tools	
*	Vertex/Edge Drag	Edits curves or surfaces by dragging their vertices and edges.
B	Filler	Fills geometrical holes and gaps in geometry.
mm	Stitch Geometry	Stitches curve bodies and/or edges of sheet bodies together by selecting the bodies you wish to connect.
	Push/Pull	Modifies geometry by pushing and pulling solid faces, 2D surfaces, or the edges of solid bodies.
<b>(</b>	Defeature	The defeature tool removes holes, fillets, and chamfers from your model by clicking on the feature.
S	Curves	Creates curves using multiple creation methods.
	Geometry Cleanup	Provides options to perform selected geometry cleanup operations with specific tolerance values.
	Boolean	Merge, Subtract, or Intersect existing solid geometry to create new geometric entities.
<b>~</b>	Geometry from Mesh	Creates faceted geometry and optionally analytical and NURBS geometry from CAD-like mesh or STL imported as mesh
Ø	Surface Loft	Creates a surface through the selected curves or edges with start and end tangency matching existing geometry.
<u> </u>	Datum Plane	Create a datum plane by the location on geometry, or 1-3 points, or a coordinate system axis.
	Split Surfaces	Surface splitting tool providing three methods.

## Geometry Edit, Meshing & FEM Edit



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\$	Geometry Edit Tools (Cont.)	
r \$1	Add/Remove Vertex	Adds an additional vertex to selected geometry, or removes a topologically insignificant vertex by clicking on it.
$\sim$	Split Curves	Splits curves at intersections with selected faces, curves, or points.
	Revolve/Sweep	Revolves geometry about an axis or sweeps it along a path to create higher order geometry.
<b>[</b> ≁]	Suppress/Unsup press	Suppresses or unsuppresses edges and vertices.
•	Points	Creates a point nearest the cursor location on the selected curve or surface, or at an X-Y-Z position entered.
5	Extend Surfaces	Extends surfaces to intersect with adjacent geometry.
	Split Tool	Splits existing geometry along an existing surface or plane.
<b>\$</b>	Facet to NURBS	Converts Imported STL or other organic shaped Facet bodies to NURBS.
	MidSurface	Tools to create midsurfaces from solid geometry.

B	Meshing Tools/Meshing Control Tools		
	Curve Mesh	Creates a bar mesh on curves, edges, or other one-dimensional geometry.	
10	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: depends on specified properties (e.g. CBAR/CBEAM, linear/quadratic elements)	
A	Surface Mesh	Creates a mesh of quadrilateral or triangular elements on surfaces or the faces of solid geometry bodies	
	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: depends on specified properties (e.g. CTRI/CQUAD, linear/quadratic elements)	
	Solid Mesh	Meshes solid geometry with tetra, hex and/or pyramid elements.	
	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: CTETRA/CHEXA/CPENTA/CPYRAM, linear/quadratic elements	
<b>n</b> 9	Shrink Wrap Mesh	Creates a watertight mesh from multiple disconnected bodies that are in close proximity of each other.	
La	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: CTRI/CQUAD, linear/quadratic elements	
00	Node Create	Creates a node at the cursor location, at a selected arc's center, or at an intersection of two selected curves.	
000	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: GRID	
6000	Seeding	Defines the mesh density along a selected edge by specifying the size or number of elements to be created.	
	Mesh Control	This tool allows you to define seed points and mesh control curves to control the mesh on a surface.	
<b>C</b>	Feature Mesh Settings	Defines meshing parameters for features, allowing control over the meshing of different auto-recognized regions of the model.	

E.	FEM Edit Too	ols/ID Management Tools
B	Node Move	Moves nodes by dragging to adjust the mesh.
	Node Merge	Merges selected adjacent nodes within a tolerance distance of each other into a shared node to create a continuous mesh.
₩î ¶	Node Align	Distributes the selected nodes evenly along a path between the end points or along a specified curve.
	Element Split	Splits existing elements at selected geometry or along a path defined by nodes.
Ŷ	Element Orientation	Reverses the element normal direction of the selected shell elements.
<b>H</b>	Element Separate	Allows you to separate elements to rearrange the model structure to better match the need of users.
1 2	Renumber Entities	Renumbers nodes or elements for selected parts and/or assemblies by providing either a starting ID or an offset value.

#### Loads/Constraints



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	k	Loads and C	onstraints/Initial Conditions
	A.	Initial Temperature	Defines constant initial temperature for selected entities.
	0	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: TEMP, TEMPD, TEMPP1, TEMPN1
		Initial Strain	Defines initial equivalent plastic strain values.
	4	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: IPSTRAIN
	UV	Initial Disp. and Velocity	Defines Initial displacement and velocity for the selected entities.
	0	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: TIC
	A	Initial Beam Temperature	Defines Initial beam temperature for selected entities.
	<b>.</b>	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: TEMPRB, TEMPB3
		Initial Stress	Defines initial stress values.
	~	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: ISTRESS

k	Loads and C	constraints/Constraints
	Constraint	Constrains the selected locations in the specified degrees of freedom.
U <i>@</i>	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: SPC, SPC1
-	Exclude DOF AUTOSPC	Defines a set of degrees of freedom that will be excluded from the AUTOSPC operation.
t.	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: AUTOSPC (SPCOFF), AUTOSPC (SPCOFF1)
•	Support	Defines the reference degree of freedom for rigid body motion.
aad	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: SUPORT, SUPORT1

<b>⊨</b> ⊕	Constraint Combination	Combine multiple constraints.
	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: SPCADD

k	Loads and C	constraints/Structural Loads
<b>_</b>	Force	Applies a force load to the model at the selected locations.
•	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: FORCE, FORCE1, FORCE2
2	Pressure	Applies a pressure to a selected face in the model.
	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: PLOAD, PLOAD2, PLOAD4
2	Load Scale Factor	Applies a load scale factor to the model at the selected locations.
4	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: DAREA
A	Beam Dist. Load	Applies a beam distributed load to the model at the selected locations.
	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: PLOAD1, PLOADB3
R	Lug Load	Creates a lug load where a force is distributed over a curved surface.
b	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: PLOAD4
0	Moment	Applies a moment load to the model at the selected locations.
•	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: MOMENT, MOMENT1, MOMENT2
<b>[]</b> 。	Enforced Motion	Applies enforced motion to a point in your model.
	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: SPCD, SPCR
HLA	Load Combination	Combine multiple loads.
P	MSC Nastran	Entity: LOAD, DLOAD

Keyword

	1D Axial	Defines enforced axial deformation for one-dimensional
r×1	Deformation	elements.
<u>•-</u> •	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: DEFORM
F	Bolt Preload	Defines properties for Bolt Preload.
	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: FORCE

k	Loads and C	onstraints/Gravity, Rot. Force and Acceleration
0	Gravity Load	Applies gravitational acceleration with a specified magnitude and direction.
	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: GRAV
Ģ	Rotational Force	Applies a rotational force to the model at the selected locations.
	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: RFORCE
₿₽	Acceleration Load	Defines static acceleration loads.
	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: ACCEL, ACCEL1

1	Loads and Constraints/Dynamic Loads	
	Dynamic Load	Applies a dynamic load to the model by selecting the excitation loads.
	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: RLOAD1, RLOAD2, TLOAD1, TLOAD2, ACSRCE

#### Loads/Constraints, Attribution, Interactions & Misc.



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k	Loads and Constraints/Thermal Loads	
8	Temperature	Applies a constant or spatially varying temperature to the selected entities as a thermal load.
•	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: TEMP, TEMPD, TEMPP1, TEMPN1
1	Beam Temperature	Applies a temperature to the beam elements for determination of thermal loading.
<b>–</b>	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: TEMPRB, TEMPB3

	Attribution 1	Fools/Properties
	Auto- Thickness	Uses original solid geometry to automatically define thickness and offset section properties for midsurface elements.
	Thickness and Offset Field	Applies thickness and offset field values to selected entities in th model.
	Material Orient. Field	Applies material orientation to selected entities in the model.
¢	Interface	Defines an interface with associated degrees of freedom for MNI Export.
$\frown$	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: ASET1, SET3
100	Nonstructural Mass	Applies mass per area or length to selected entities in the model.
00	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: NSM1, NSML1
	Point Mass	Applies the specified mass and inertia properties at the location specified, connected to one or more existing nodes.
1	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: CONM2
	Panels	Defines composite panels by arranging plies of specific material with specified othickness and orientation.
¥	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: MAT8, PCOMPG

Ś	Interactions	/Interactions and Ties
	Interaction	Defines interaction, such as glued, touching and self-contact, between multiple parts independent of their existing mesh.
	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: BCBODY1, BCONECT, BCONPRG, BCONPRP, BCONTACT, BCPARA, BCTABL1, BSURF
*	Discrete Tie	Creates a rigid or compliant tie between multiple points and a single point.
	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: RBE2, RBE3
2	Mesh Dependent Tie	Defines a relationship between edges and faces of seperate parts to ensure a congruent connected mesh between them.
	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: N.A. (Model Build Concept-Only)

5	Interactions/Discrete Connectors	
ALL OF	Connector	Creates a connector, based on multiple types, between entites in your model.
	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: CELAS2, CDAMP2, CBUSH1D, CBUSH, RBAR, CBAR, CGAP, CFAST
<b>ò</b>	Joint	Creates joints with specific degrees of freedom based on the selected joint type and orientation.
	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: RBE2, RBE3

5	Interactions/Bolts	
T.	3D Bolt	Defines properties for 3D bolt.
₩ U	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: BOLT1
ł	Bolt Preload	Defines properties for Bolt Preload.
	MSC Nastran Keyword	Entity: FORCE

<b>~</b> >>)	Sensors and	Instrumentation
15	Point Sensor	Monitors output of specific degre of freedom channels at a specified location.
	X-Section Force Sensor	Defines a cross section location for a cross section force sensor to demonstrate transmitted loads in post processing.

1	Coordinate System			
	Coordinate	Allows you to create a user defined rectangular, cylindrical, or		
+	System	spherical coordinate system with location and orientation.		
~	MSC Nastran	Entity: CORD2C, CORD2R, CORD2S		
	Keyword	Linky. Condec, Condex, Condes		
•	Assign Coord.	Specifies an existing coordinate system to be used as the		
~	System	analysis coordinate system for specific entities.		

æ	Group	
<b>A</b>	Group	Creates a group for arbitrary entities.

	Design Explo	pration
8	Design	The Design Variables are named entities that can define a single
8	Variable	value, a continuous range of value or a discrete set of values.

# Properties, Damping and Parameters



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8	Beams		
	Туре	MSC Nastran Keyword	Description
	Shape - Numeric Bar	PBAR	Defines The Properties Of A Bar Element By Numerical Values.
	Shape - Numeric Beam	PBEAM	Defines The Properties Of A Beam Element By Numerical Values.
	Shape - Standard	PBEAML	Defines The Properties Of A Beam Element By Cross-Sectional Dimensions.
	Shape - Numeric Bar	PROD	Defines The Properties Of A Rod Element By Numerical Values.

	2D Element Properties		
	Туре	MSC Nastran Keyword	Description
	Nonlinear Plane	PLPLANE	Nonlinear Properties For A Plane Strain/Stress Or Axisymmetric Element.
	Shear Panel	PSHEAR	Properties Of A Shear Panel.
	Nonlinear Shear Panel	PSHEARN	Nonlinear Properties Of A Shear Panel.
	Shell	PSHELL	Membrane, Bending, Transverse Shear, And Coupling Properties Of Thin Shell Elements.
	Nonlinear Shell	PSHLN1	Additional Nonlinear Properties For Shell Elements.
	Nonlinear Plane Ext.	PSHLN2	Additional Nonlinear Properties For A Plane Strain/Stress Or Axisymmetric Element.

7	3D Element Properties		
	Туре	MSC Nastran Keyword	Description
	Interface Cohesive Zone	РСОНЕ	Nonlinear Element Used To Simulate Delamination.
	Nonlinear Hyperelastic	PLSOLID	Nonlinear Hyperelastic Solid Element.
	Nonlinear Solid	PSLDN1	Additional Nonlinear Properties Of Solid Elements.
	Solid	PSOLID	Properties Of Solid Elements.

Sheets/Stacks		
Туре	MSC Nastran Keyword	Description
Sheet	MAT8	Orthotropic material for isoparametric shell elements.
Stack	PCOMPG	Defines global ply IDs and properties for a composite material laminate.

	Modal Damping		
	Туре	MSC Nastran Keyword	Description
	Crit. Damping Fraction	TABDMP1 (TYPE='CRIT')	Defines modal damping as a tabular function of natural frequency.
	Equiv. Viscous Damping	TABDMP1 (TYPE='G')	Defines modal damping as a tabular function of natural frequency.
	Quality Factor	TABDMP1 (TYPE='Q')	Defines modal damping as a tabular function of natural frequency.

1	Parameters and System Cells		
	Туре	MSC Nastran Keyword	Description
	Parameters, Bulk Data	Numerous	Refer To Documentation
	Parameters, Case Control	Numerous	Refer To Documentation
	System Cells	Numerous	Refer To Documentation

#### Materials & Material Dependency



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Materials		
Туре	MSC Nastran Keyword	Description
Shape Memory	MASTSMA	Material Properties For Shape Memory Materials
Isotropic	MAT1	Material Properties For Linear Isotropic Material
Fluid	MAT10	Material Properties For Fluid Elements In Couple Fluid-Structural Analysis.
Shell Anisotropic	MAT2	Material Properties For Linear Anisotropic Materials For Two-Dimensional Elements.
Planar Orthotropic	MAT3	Material Properties For Linear Orthotropic Materials Used By The Ctriax6 Element Entry.
Isotropic Thermal	MAT4	Constant Or Temperature-Dependent Thermal Material Properties For Thermal Analyses.
Anisotropic Heat Transfer	MAT5	Thermal Material Properties For Anisotropic Materials.
Shell Orthotropic	MAT8	Orthotropic Material For Isoparametric Shell Elements.
General Anisotropic	MAT9	Linear, Temp-Independent, Anisotropic Material Properties For Solid Isoparametric Elements
Digimat Composite	MATDIGI	Defines Material Data For Advanced Composite With Digimat.
Gasket	MATG	Material Properties For Gaskets.
Hyperelastic	MATHE	Specifies Hyperelastic Material Props For Nonlinear (Large Strain/Rotation) Analysis.
5th Order Mooney Rivlin	МАТНР	Material Properties For Nonlinear Hyperelastic Analysis Of Rubber-Like Materials.
3D Orthotropic	MATORT	3D Orthotropic Material Properties.
Isotropic Poroelastic	MATPE1	Material Properties For An Isotropic Poroelastic Material.
Hypoelastic User Sub	MATUSR	Specifies User-Defined, Generic Material Properties For Hypoelastic Material Models.
Cohesive zone properties	мсоне	Material Cohesive Properties For A Fully Nonline Element Used To Simulate Delamination.

Material Dependency		
Туре	MSC Nastran Keyword	Description
Fluid	MAT10F	Frequency-Dependent Material Properties.
lsotropic Freq. Dep.	MAT1F	Frequency-Dependent Material Properties.
Freq. Dep. Shell Aniso.	MAT2F	Frequency-Dependent Material Properties.
Freq. Dep. Shell Ortho.	MAT8F	Frequency-Dependent Material Properties.
Freq. Dep. Solid Aniso.	MAT9F	Frequency-Dependent Material Properties.
Elasto-Plastic	МАТЕР	Elasto-Plastic Material Properties.
Failure Models	MATF	Failure Model Properties For Linear Elastic Materials.
Iso Poroelastic Freq. Dep.	MATF1	Frequency Dependent Properties For Isotropic Poroelastic Materials.
Fatigue Properties	MATFTG	Fatigue Material Properties For Time Domain- Based Analysis.
Material Stress Dep.	MATS1	Stress-Dependent Properties For Nonlinear Materials.
NL Elastic Ortho. Axisym.	MATS3	Advanced Orthotropic, Nonlinear Elastic Materials For Axisymmetric Elements.
NL Elastic Shell Ortho.	MATS8	Advanced Orthotropic, Nonlinear Elastic Material For Shell Elements.
NL Elastis Ortho. Shell	MATSORT	Advanced Orthotropic, Nonlinear Elastic Material for Shell Elements.
Isotropic Temp Dep.	MATT1	Temperature-Dependent Material Properties.
Temp. Dep. Shell Aniso.	MATT2	Anisotropic Material Temperature Dependence.
Temp. Dep. Planar Ortho.	MATT3	MAT3 Material Temperature Dependence.
Temp. Dep. Isotrop. Thrm.	MATT4	Thermal Material Temperature Dependence
Temp. Dep. Aniso. Therm.	MATT5	Thermal Anisotropic Material Temperature Dependence

Temp. Dep. Shell Ortho.	MATT8	Shell Orthotropic Material Temperature Dependence
Temp. Dep. Solid Aniso.	MATT9	Solid Element Anisotropic Material Temperature Dependence
Thermo Elasto- Plastic	MATTEP	Temperature-Dependent Elasto-Plastic Material Properties.
Failure Time Dep.	MATTF	Temperature, Strain Rate, Or Other Type Of Variation Of Material Failure Properties.
Temp. Dep. Gasket	MATTG	Temperature Variation of Interlaminar Materials
Temp. Dep. Hyperelastic	MATTHE	Hyperelastic Material - Temperature Dependence
Thermo- Elastic Ortho.	MATTTORT	Thermoelastic Orthotropic Material
Table User- Def. Mat.	MATTUSR	Specifies Table Variation of User Defined Generic Materials
Viscoplastic or Creep	MATVP	Viscoplastic Or Creep Material Properties.

## **Keyboard Shortcuts**

Keyboard Shortcuts		
Tool	Shortcut	Functionality
On mesh objects	Double clicking	This launches the properties panel.
Model Browser	A	Toggles between showing and hiding the Model Browser.
Model browser individual color button	Double clicking	This launches the render panel and leaves it up.
Meshing & Seeding pop up copy button	Double clicking	Double clicking on the copy button keeps you in paste mode until you press ESCAPE.
Transform Tool	U	Unlocks manipulator so you can reposition or reorient it, then relock it by pressing U again.
Transform Tool	т	Switch to Axes Manipulators.
Transform Tool	R	Switch to Rings Manipulators.
Transform Tool	т	Alternate between Manipulator Axes.
Transform Tool	R	Alternate between Manipulator Rings.
Transform Tool	SPACEBAR	Bring up the transform pop up.
Transform Tool	CTRL	Holding CTRL while transforming copies and moves the object.
Picking	L	Switches between inclusive and exclusive mode for rectangular picking to select entities that are either entirely within the picking box or touched by it.
Picking	ο	When you are preselecting, you can press 'O', and it will cycle through entities that the aperture is touching.
Picking	н	When you are preselecting over a face, you press 'H' and it will hide that face.

Picking	SHIFT + H	This unhides the faces that were hidden by the 'H' key.
Picking	ESCAPE + H	Unhides all faces that were hidden by the 'H' key.
Picking	Ρ	Switch between allowing ability to pick occluded edges & vertices AND disallowing the ability to pick occluded edges & vertices.
Picking	Alt + Double Click	Selects entities that are contiguous with the point, curve, or surface picked.
Sketcher	F	Bring sketch grid parallel to the screen.
Push Pull	F	Tab through options in COPs.
Push Pull	ALT	As you push pull and you hold ALT down, it will snap up to targets.
Push pull	x	When you select a face you want to push pull through a solid to cut it, pressing 'X' will automatically cut through the solid.
Vertex Drag	SHIFT	When dragging, pressing SHIFT down will force the adjacent edges attached to the dragged vertex or edge to be straight.
Selection	CTRL	Toggle Accumulation multi selection.
Selection	SHIFT	Pure accumulation multi selection.
Selection	SHIFT + CTRL	Pure removal multi selection.
Surface split	SHIFT + MMB	In Manual model, clicking MMB will advance to the next selection stage, therefore SHIFT + MMB will reverse transition to the previous selection stage.
Surface split by path	SHIFT	During path creation, holding down forces the path straight instead of spline.
Picking	Up and down arrows	Traverse model hierarchy.
Picking	Left and Right	Traverse entity dimensionality.

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Snap box	z	Increases the size of the snap box.
Snap box	с	Decreases the size of the snap box.
Seeding & meshing tools	SPACEBAR	Launches the pop up with mesh & seeding properties.
Application	F11	Fullscreen mode.
Application	CTRL + N	New Model.
Application	CTRL + O	Open Model.
Application	CTRL + I	Import Geometry Files.
Application	CTRL + F	Import FEM Files.
Application	CTRL + G	Import Generative Design Results.
Application	CTRL + S	Save.
Application	CTRL + W	Close Model.
Application	CTRL + Q	Exit Application.
General for all tools	ESCAPE	Reverts to initial state of tool. Also clears selections.
Curve tool	SHIFT	Makes splines straight lines while holding SHIFT down and creating curves.
Undo	CTRL+Z	Does a general undo, up to a maximum of 50 steps.
Redo	CTRL+Y	Does a general redo.