

# Chapter 8

## How to run your code in R

Typing a series of commands at the R prompt is useful for small analyses. But what if you have a lot of analyses to do? Or what if you want to keep track of what you are doing? Or you want to keep repeating very similar but long commands till you get thing just right?

The best way is to proceed as follows:

- Start your favourite text editor, such as Notepad, Wordpad, Kwrite, Emacs.
- Type your R commands into this text editor.
- Save the file somewhere with the extension<sup>1</sup> `.R`; for example, `analysis.R`.
- Ensure the working directory of R is set to where this file is located (for example, using `getwd()` and `setwd()`).
- In R, type, for example, `source("analysis.R")`. In Windows, `source-ing` a file also appears in the File menu item.

This approach has at least two significant advantages over working at the command prompt alone:

- You keep a permanent copy of what you have done.
- If you have any changes you need to make, you can make them in the `.R` file and run the code again quite easily.

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<sup>1</sup>The extension can be anything you like: `.txt`, `.r` or whatever. However, protocol and tradition encourage one to use the `.R` extension.

If you use Emacs, you can get extra functionality using ESS (Emacs Speaks Statistics).

In the following Chapters, we will assume you are using scripts.