

It's called "Code" but you don't need to be a developer. A cardiologist won Anthropic's hackathon with it.

## 7 Steps to Get Started

1. **Download VS Code** — free for Mac, Windows, and Linux. Install from [code.visualstudio.com](https://code.visualstudio.com). Just an app, like Slack or Notion.
2. **Install the Extension** — Ctrl+Shift+X, search "Claude Code", click Install. Disable GitHub Copilot Chat if it is active.
3. **Open Your Cowork Folder** — File > Open Folder > pick the same folder you use with Cowork. Your CLAUDE.md and connectors carry over. You don't start from zero.
4. **Set Model and Effort** — /model for Opus 4.6. /effort for thinking depth. The VS Code extension gives you UI buttons for both.
5. **Your Connectors Follow You** — Cowork web connectors (Gmail, Slack, Notion) are tied to your account. They work in Code automatically — no re-setup required.
6. **Learn Plan Mode** — press Shift+Tab before any request. Claude proposes a plan and waits for your OK before changing anything.
7. **Let Auto Memory Work** — Claude saves your patterns and preferences to memory.md per workspace. Use /memory to review or edit what Claude remembers.

## Commands Worth Knowing

Command	What It Does
<b>/model, /effort</b>	Switch AI model and thinking depth
<b>/loop</b>	Set up recurring tasks (up to 3-day cycles)
<b>/init</b>	Create a CLAUDE.md file for your project
<b>/compact</b>	Compress conversation to free context space
<b>/review</b>	Review a pull request
<b>/context</b>	Check token usage (watch at 50%)
<b>/memory</b>	Manage auto-saved memory
<b>/config</b>	Settings and preferences
<b>/security-review</b>	Scan changes for vulnerabilities

## Pro Tips and Hacks

- **Pipedream MCP** — one connector to 1,000+ APIs. Add [mcp.pipedream.net/v2](https://mcp.pipedream.net/v2) as an MCP server. Gmail, Sheets, Jira — anything.
- **Remote Control** — run `claude remote-control` in the terminal. Continue from `claude.ai` or the mobile app. Survives sleep and auto-reconnects.
- **Markdown WYSIWYG** — install "Markdown Preview Enhanced" extension. Edit .md files with a live side-by-side preview.
- **Cascading CLAUDE.md** — root CLAUDE.md plus subfolder overrides. Auto-activated when Claude works with files in that directory. Like CSS inheritance for AI instructions.
- **Repo-Specific Skills** — `.claude/skills/` per repo for project-scoped skills. `~/claude/skills/` for global skills across all projects.
- **Combine Cowork + Code** — Cowork `/schedule` for persistent daily cron plus Code `/loop` for in-session monitoring. Same CLAUDE.md, same connectors. Use both.

## What Carries Over From Cowork

Carries Over	New in Code
CLAUDE.md instructions	Git integration
Web connectors	Bash / terminal access
Skills	Auto memory (memory.md)
Folder structure	Plan mode (Shift+Tab)
Same AI model	/loop for recurring tasks

## Key Concept: CLAUDE.md

- **Your project's instruction manual for AI** — lives in the root of your folder. Claude reads it automatically every session.
- **Put your standards in it** — coding conventions, tone, format rules, project context, and any constraints Claude should follow.
- **Subfolder overrides** — add a CLAUDE.md to any subfolder for directory-specific rules that extend the root file.
- **Shared across tools** — the same file works in both Cowork and Code.

Source: The Product Compass ([productcompass.pm](https://productcompass.pm)) — If you've used Cowork, you're already 70% there.