

An Easy Way to Insert Common Fractions
WordPerfect Magazine
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Whether you type recipes or mathematical manuscripts, you may need to insert fractions into your documents. For example, if you're typing a recipe, you might have to type "2 1/2 C. flour." You could, of course, just type "2 1/2"; however, that isn't as attractive or as readable as "2½," which includes the true typographic fraction "½."

Fortunately, WordPerfect's Compose feature provides typographic symbols of the most common fractions. Unfortunately, it's virtually impossible to remember the character set and character number for these fractions. That's why I created the included ALTF.WPM macro.

Using the macro

To use the macro, place your cursor in the location that you want the fraction and press (Alt-F). At the prompt "Fraction (e.g., 1/2):" type "1/2" and press (Enter) to insert ½, or type "1/4" to insert ¼, and so forth. The macro allows you to type these fractions: 1/2; 1/4; 3/4; 1/3; 2/3; 1/8; 3/8; 5/8; and 7/8.

Understanding the macro

The key to understanding the macro is the macro command {CALL}. This advanced macro command allows you to call a subroutine within a macro. A subroutine is a portion of a macro that executes a specified set of commands and then returns to the macro command immediately after the {CALL} command.

The {CALL} command requires the following syntax: {CALL}label~ where label is the label name that begins a subroutine. The called subroutine must begin with the {LABEL} command and end with the {RETURN} command, which tells the macro to return control to the command after the {CALL} command.

In the second line in Figure 2, the {CALL} command uses a variable as the label, which means that the label may be different each time you run the macro. When you execute the macro and type a fraction such as "1/2," the {TEXT} command assigns the string "1/2" to the variable Frac.

The {CALL} command then uses the value of the variable, in this case "1/2," as the label for calling a subroutine. Since one of the subroutines – shown in lines 4 to the end of the macro – begins with {LABEL}1/2~, the {CALL} command will call that subroutine when Frac equals "1/2."

The {RETURN} command at the end of that subroutine will then cause macro control to return to the command after the {CALL} command, namely, the {QUIT} command on the third line of the macro listing in Figure 2.

Note that if you enter a fraction that doesn't have a corresponding {LABEL} command, the macro quits since the label does not exist.

Each of the subroutines in the ALTF macro uses {^V} (Ctrl-V) to execute a Compose command. Each Compose command specifies the character set, which in this macro is always 4, and the character number corresponding to a fraction character in the character set. Thus, each subroutine inserts a fraction character into the document.