How do I get into CMOS?

CMOS – (Abbv. *Complementary Metal Oxide Semiconductor*). Pron. '*see-moss*'

CMOS is a widely used type of semiconductor. CMOS semiconductors use both NMOS (negative polarity) and PMOS (positive polarity) circuits. Since only one of the circuit types is on at any given time, CMOS chips require less power than chips using just one type of transistor. This makes them particularly attractive for use in battery-powered devices, such as portable computers. Personal computers also contain a small amount of battery-powered CMOS memory to hold the date, time, and system setup parameters.

CMOS Setups: Setting Parameters for Hard Drives - referred to as the System Setup Program, is used to establish and store parameters for your system. You will need to access your CMOS program if you are installing a hard drive on your system, or if you notice that your system does not recognize the full capacity of the hard drive. CMOS setup programs vary according to manufacturer, each with its own way of accessing the CMOS setup. Many are accessed using hot-key combinations usually after rebooting the computer. For some systems, like IBM, the setup program is on a system diskette.

To enter your CMOS (SETUP) you need to boot the computer and when the 1st screen comes up, you will see an identification info screen that has your BIOS numbers on it, the kind of BIOS, and the Memory counter clicking away.

The screen should also tell you what HOT KEY(s) you need to invoke to enter SETUP. This again varies from computer to computer. Here is a list of the ones I could find:

The Delete key is the most common
Press **Delete** during boot = AMI, Award BIOS
Press **Esc** during boot = Toshiba
Press **F1** during boot = Toshiba; Phoenix; Late model PS/1 Value Point and 330s
Press **F10** when cursor jumps to top right-hand corner of screen = Compaq
Press **F10** when logo screen is displayed = Compaq
Press **F2** during boot = NEC
Press Insert during boot = IBM PS/2 with reference partition
Press **Tab** during boot = eMachine
Press **Reset button twice** = some Dells
Ctrl **Alt +** = Misc computers
Ctrl **Alt ?** = Some PS/2s, such as 75 and 90
Ctrl **Alt Enter** = Dell
Ctrl **Alt Esc** = AST Advantage, Award, Tandon
Ctrl **Alt Ins** = Zenith, Phoenix
Ctrl **Alt S** = Phoenix
Ctrl **Alt Shift** + Num Pad Del = Olivetti PC Pro
Ctrl **Esc** = Misc computers
Ctrl **Ins** = some PS/2s when pointer at top right of screen

Note for some Award BIOS:

Some older versions of this BIOS had a default password set to AWARD_SW note that is must be in upper case.

For some Phoenix BIOS:

To tell if your computer has a Phoenix BIOS, watch the screen carefully when you boot. One of the first lines to appear contains the word "Phoenix."

1. If you are in Windows, exit to DOS or boot off a DOS disk.

2. Press Ctrl+Alt+Esc. The setup screen appears. If you have made certain changes to your system, or are having certain problems with your system, this may not work. If Pressing Ctrl+Alt+Esc doesn't open the setup program, follow these steps:

1. (Leave the computer switched on.) Use the key to lock the keyboard.

2. Press the Reset button on the front of the computer. A message appears asking you to unlock the keyboard

3. Unlock the keyboard and press F2 to run the CMOS setup.

4. Press Del. This brings up the CMOS setup program.

If you have an EISA computer:

1. Press the Reset button on the front of the computer, then press Ctrl+Alt+Esc immediately when the memory count begins. If this combination doesn't work, use Crtl+Alt+S.

AST
Many AST 486's require CTRL-ALT-ESC

Compaq
Generally Compaq Setup can be entered by hitting the 'F10' key when booting up. As soon as you see the cursor go to the upper right hand side of the screen, hit 'F10'. Compaq setup program resides on a small partition on the hard drive and if you have fdisked and reformatted or installed a new hard drive you will need to use the Compaq setup program from here:

Compaq Setup Download
<http://www5.compaq.com/support/files/wsdsfr.html>

Dell
Older Dells (486 models) require you to enter the sequence: CTRL-ALT-ENTER

Hewlett Packard
Pentium Systems: Hold down the F1 key upon startup/bootup

IBM ThinkPad
ThinkPad using IBM BIOS (Early Models): Press CTRL-ALT-INS when cursor is in upper-right corner of screen

ThinkPad using IBM BIOS (Later Models):
Press and hold F1 key while powering-up laptop

ThinkPad using Phoenix BIOS:
Press CTRL-ALT-F11 from DOS prompt

Packard Bell
Early models (386,486) require the sequence Ctrl-ALT-S at any time

NEC Versa Notebooks
Hold down the F1 key upon startup/bootup

EC Versa Notebooks
Hold down the F1 key upon startup/bootup

Other Common BIOS Key Sequences
CTRL-ALT-S
CTRL-ALT-Enter
CTRL-ALT-Insert
CTRL-ALT-Esc
F1
F10
Ctrl S = Phoenix
Ctrl Shift Esc = Tandon 386