1. Set-up. If you use a Mac I recommend using R and RStudio. RStudio sits on top of R and provides an integrated environment for developing scripts and managing your data analysis projects.  
  
On Windows you have the choice of R + Tinn-R or R + RStudio. There seem to be some problems configuring Tinn-R to work properly with R on Win7 or Win8 so I also recommend R + RStudio on Windows.

2. Books and other documents. There is a wealth of free documentation available on the official R site:[http://cran.r-project.org/](http://cran.r-project.org/" \t "_blank), including the official manuals (which although authoritative are a bit dry) a range of "user guides" ([http://cran.r-project.org/other-docs.html](http://cran.r-project.org/other-docs.html" \t "_blank)) and list of published books ([http://www.r-project.org/doc/bib/R-books.html](http://www.r-project.org/doc/bib/R-books.html" \t "_blank)).  
  
For books I strongly recommend you buy the following (in order of purchase):  
  
De Vries, A. & Meys, J (2012) R for Dummies. Wiley. Excellent introduction to the R language and environment.  
  
Zuur, A., Ieno, E., & Meesters, E. (2009) A Beginner's Guide to R. Springer. Excellent book that focusses on using R, rather than any particular statistical methods. Highly recommended.  
  
The above two books concentrate on learning R but don't have a huge amount on statistical methods. For basic stats using R (ANOVA, regression etc.) Dalgaard is the standard text though there are many others listed on the link above.  
  
Dalgaard, P. (2008) Introductory Statistics with R Springer, New York. Second edition. An excellent introduction to basic data handling, graphics and statistics in R.  
  
For analysing ecological data I strongly recommend you get Borcard et al. This covers analysis of community ecology data (RDA, CCA, cluster analysis) and will allow you to replace Canoco with R.  
  
Borcard, D., Gillet, F., & Legendre, P. (2011) Numerical Ecology with R Springer. Excellent, highly readable text on analysing ecological data. Multivariate ecological statistics with R, highly readable and useable.  
  
For those that want to get into a bit more programming for graphics and data manipulation provides a more advanced guide to the R language. This is an excellent book and recommended if you plan to stick with R.  
  
Matloff, N (2011) The Art of R Programming. No starch press, San Francisco.  
  
Finally, there is a nice book on RStudio published last year. This is usful for those developing larger data analysis projects and documenting code + output.  
  
[http://www.amazon.co.uk/Learning-RStudio-R-Statistical-Computing/dp/1782160604/ref=sr\_1\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1371032595&sr=8-1&keywords=rstudio](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Learning-RStudio-R-Statistical-Computing/dp/1782160604/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1371032595&sr=8-1&keywords=rstudio" \t "_blank)