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# Bash - Command Line Tricks



Local copy of: <https://likegeeks.com/linux-command-line-tricks/>



- **column**: Debian-package - util-linux

## Display Output as a Table

Sometimes it's painful to read the output well due to the overcrowded strings, for example, the result of the mount command, what about viewing the output like a table? It is an easy job.

```
mount | column -t
```

```
sysfs                on /sys
type sysfs           (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime)
proc                 on /proc
type proc            (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime)
udev                 on /dev
type devtmpfs        (rw,nosuid,relatime,size=12319496k,nr_inodes=3079874,mode=755)
devpts               on /dev/pts
type devpts          (rw,nosuid,noexec,relatime,gid=5,mode=620,ptmxmode=000)
tmpfs                on /run
type tmpfs           (rw,nosuid,noexec,relatime,size=2468204k,mode=755)
/dev/mapper/detlev--vg-root on /
type ext4            (rw,relatime,errors=remount-ro)
securityfs           on /sys/kernel/security
type securityfs     (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime)
tmpfs                on /dev/shm
type tmpfs           (rw,nosuid,nodev)
tmpfs                on /run/lock
type tmpfs           (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime,size=5120k)
tmpfs                on /sys/fs/cgroup
type tmpfs           (ro,nosuid,nodev,noexec,mode=755)
cgroup2              on /sys/fs/cgroup/unified
type cgroup2         (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime,nsdelegate)
cgroup               on /sys/fs/cgroup/systemd
type cgroup          (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime,xattr,name=systemd)
pstore               on /sys/fs/pstore
type pstore          (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime)
bpf                  on /sys/fs/bpf
type bpf             (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime,mode=700)
cgroup               on /sys/fs/cgroup/net_cls,net_prio
type cgroup          (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime,net_cls,net_prio)
cgroup               on /sys/fs/cgroup/pids
type cgroup          (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime,pids)
cgroup               on /sys/fs/cgroup/blkio
type cgroup          (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime,blkio)
cgroup               on /sys/fs/cgroup/memory
type cgroup          (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime,memory)
cgroup               on /sys/fs/cgroup/cpuset
type cgroup          (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime,cpuset)
cgroup               on /sys/fs/cgroup/freezer
type cgroup          (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime,freezer)
cgroup               on /sys/fs/cgroup/cpu,cpuacct
type cgroup          (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime,cpu,cpuacct)
cgroup               on /sys/fs/cgroup/perf_event
type cgroup          (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime,perf_event)
```

```
cgroup on /sys/fs/cgroup/devices
type cgroup (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime,devices)
cgroup on /sys/fs/cgroup/rdma
type cgroup (rw,nosuid,nodev,noexec,relatime,rdma)
debugfs on /sys/kernel/debug
type debugfs (rw,relatime)
hugetlbfs on /dev/hugepages
type hugetlbfs (rw,relatime,pagesize=2M)
mqueue on /dev/mqueue
type mqueue (rw,relatime)
systemd-1 on /proc/sys/fs/binfmt_misc
type autofs (rw,relatime,fd=48,pgrp=1,timeout=0,minproto=5,maxproto=5,direct,pipe_ino=11783)
sunrpc on /run/rpc_pipefs
type rpc_pipefs (rw,relatime)
/dev/sda1 on /boot
type ext2 (rw,relatime)
/dev/mapper/1Tera01--vg-data01 on /mnt/data01
type ext4 (rw,relatime)
binfmt_misc on /proc/sys/fs/binfmt_misc
type binfmt_misc (rw,relatime)
tmpfs on /run/user/1000
type tmpfs (rw,nosuid,nodev,relatime,size=2468200k,mode=700,uid=1000,gid=1000)
gvfsd-fuse on /run/user/1000/gvfs
type fuse.gvfsd-fuse (rw,nosuid,nodev,relatime,user_id=1000,group_id=1000)
fusectl on /sys/fs/fuse/connections
type fusectl (rw,relatime)
/dev/fuse on /run/user/1000/doc
type fuse (rw,nosuid,nodev,relatime,user_id=1000,group_id=1000)
/etc/auto.denker.wiretrip.de-cifs on /home/def/mnt/cifs
type autofs (rw,relatime,fd=6,pgrp=2327,timeout=60,minproto=5,maxproto=5,indirect,pipe_ino=38705)
/etc/auto.denker.wiretrip.de-cifs on /home/def/mnt/cifs/denker.wiretrip.de/austausch
type autofs (rw,relatime,fd=6,pgrp=2327,timeout=60,minproto=5,maxproto=5,offset,pipe_ino=38705)
(rw,relatime,vers=default,cache=strict,username=<USER>,uid=1000,forceuid,gid=1000,forcegid,addr=192.168.0.1,file_mode=0644,dir_mode=0755,soft,nounix,mapposix,rsize=1048576,wsiz=1048576,echo_interval=60,actimeo=1)
```

OK, in this example, we see the output is well formatted because the separator between them is spaces.

What if the separators are something else, like colons :

*/etc/passwd* is a good example.

Just specify the separator with `-s` parameter like this:

```
cat /etc/passwd | column -t -s :
```

root	x	0	0	root	/root	/bin/bash
daemon	x	1	1	daemon	/usr/sbin	
/usr/sbin/nologin						
bin	x	2	2	bin	/bin	
/usr/sbin/nologin						
sys	x	3	3	sys	/dev	
/usr/sbin/nologin						
sync	x	4	65534	sync	/bin	/bin/sync
games	x	5	60	games	/usr/games	
/usr/sbin/nologin						
man	x	6	12	man	/var/cache/man	
/usr/sbin/nologin						
lp	x	7	7	lp	/var/spool/lpd	
/usr/sbin/nologin						
mail	x	8	8	mail	/var/mail	
/usr/sbin/nologin						
news	x	9	9	news	/var/spool/news	
/usr/sbin/nologin						
uucp	x	10	10	uucp	/var/spool/uucp	

/usr/sbin/nologin					
proxy	x	13	13	proxy	/bin
/usr/sbin/nologin					
backup	x	34	34	backup	/var/backups
/usr/sbin/nologin					
list	x	38	38	Mailing List Manager	/var/list
/usr/sbin/nologin					
gnats	x	41	41	Gnats Bug-Reporting System (admin)	/var/lib/gnats
/usr/sbin/nologin					
nobody	x	65534	65534	nobody	/nonexistent
/usr/sbin/nologin					
_apt	x	100	65534	/nonexistent	/usr/sbin/nologin
systemd-timesync	x	101	102	systemd Time Synchronization,,,	/run/systemd
/usr/sbin/nologin					
systemd-network	x	102	103	systemd Network Management,,,	/run/systemd
/usr/sbin/nologin					
systemd-resolve	x	103	104	systemd Resolver,,,	/run/systemd
/usr/sbin/nologin					
messagebus	x	104	110	/nonexistent	/usr/sbin/nologin
tss	x	105	111	TPM2 software stack,,,	/var/lib/tpm
dnsmasq	x	106	65534	dnsmasq,,,	/var/lib/misc
/usr/sbin/nologin					
usbmux	x	107	46	usbmux daemon,,,	/var/lib/usbmux
/usr/sbin/nologin					
rtkit	x	108	114	RealtimeKit,,,	/proc
/usr/sbin/nologin					
sshd	x	109	65534	/run/sshd	/usr/sbin/nologin
pulse	x	110	118	PulseAudio daemon,,,	/var/run/pulse
/usr/sbin/nologin					
avahi	x	112	120	Avahi mDNS daemon,,,	/var/run/avahi-daemon
/usr/sbin/nologin					
saned	x	113	121	/var/lib/saned	/usr/sbin/nologin
colord	x	114	122	colord colour management daemon,,,	/var/lib/colord
/usr/sbin/nologin					
geoclue	x	115	123	/var/lib/geoclue	/usr/sbin/nologin
hplip	x	116	7	HPLIP system user,,,	/var/run/hplip
sddm	x	117	124	Simple Desktop Display Manager	/var/lib/sddm
user	x	1000	1000	user,,,	/home/user
systemd-coredump	x	999	999	systemd Core Dumper	/
/usr/sbin/nologin					
_rpc	x	118	65534	/run/rpcbind	/usr/sbin/nologin
statd	x	119	65534	/var/lib/nfs	/usr/sbin/nologin
nvpd	x	120	125	NVIDIA Persistence Daemon,,,	/var/run/nvpd/
/usr/sbin/nologin					
uidd	x	121	126	/run/uidd	/usr/sbin/nologin

## Run Until Success

If you search google about that trick, you will find a lot of questions about people asking how to repeat the command till it returns success and runs properly, like ping the server till it becomes alive or check if a file with a specific extension is uploaded at specific directory or maybe check if a specific URL becomes available or maybe any geeky thing, the list is very long.

You can use the while true loop to achieve that:

```
while true
do
ping -c 1 heise.de > /dev/null 2>&1 && break
done
```

We use `> /dev/null 2>&1` to redirect normal output and errors to `/dev/null`.

Actually, this is one of coolest Linux Command Line Tricks for me.

## Sort Processes by Memory or CPU Usage

To sort by memory usage:

```
ps aux | sort -nk 4
```

To sort by CPU usage:

```
ps aux | sort -nk 3
```

## Check Your Architecture

```
getconf LONG_BIT
```

## Monitor Multiple Log Files Concurrently

You can use the `tail` command to watch your logs and that's fine, but sometimes you may need to monitor multiple log files simultaneously to take some actions.

Using **multitail** command which supports text highlighting, filtering, and many other features that you may need.

## Return to Your Previous Directory

It's not a trick but some people forget it, others use it every minute.

Just type `cd -` and you will return back to the previous directory.

```
cd -
```

## Make non-interactive as interactive shell session

To do this, put our settings in `~/.bashrc` from `~/.bash_profile`.

## Watch Command Output

By using `watch` command, you can watch any output of any command, for example, you can watch the free space and how it is growing:

```
watch df -h
```

You can imagine what you can do with any variant data that you can watch using `watch` command.

## Run Your Program After Session Killing

When you run any program in the background and close your shell, definitely it will be killed, what about if it continues running after closing the shell.

This can be done using the `nohup` command which stands for *no hang up*.

```
nohup wget site.com/file.zip
```

This command is really one of the most useful Linux command line tricks for most webmasters.

A file will be generated in the same directory with the name *nohup.out* contains the output of the running program.

## Answer bot Using Yes & No Commands

It's like an answer bot for those commands whose require the user to say yes.

That can be done using the yes command:

```
yes | apt-get update
```

Or maybe you want to automate saying no instead, this can be done using the following command:

```
yes no | command
```

## Create a File With a Specific Size

Use the **dd** command to create a file with a specific size:

```
dd if=/dev/zero of=out.txt bs=1M count=10
```

This will create a file with 10-megabyte size filled with zeros.

```
dd if=/dev/zero of=out.txt bs=1M count=10
```

## Run Last Command as Root

Sometimes you forget to type `sudo` before your command that requires root privileges to run, you don't have to rewrite it, just type:

```
sudo !!
```

## Record your Command Line Session

If you want to record what you've typed in your shell screen, you can use the **script** command which will save all of your typings to a file named `typescript`.

```
script
```

Once you type `exit`, all of your commands will be written to that file so you can review them later.

## Replacing Spaces with Tabs

You can replace any character with any other character using **tr** command which is very handy.

```
cat geeks.txt | tr ':[space]:' '\t' > out.txt
```

This command will replace the spaces with tabs.

## Convert Character Case

```
cat my_file | tr a-z A-Z > output.txt
```

This command converts the content of the file to upper case using the tr command.

## Powerful xargs Command

We can say that **xargs** command is one of the most important Linux command line tricks, you can use this command to pass outputs between commands as arguments, for example, you may search for png files and compress them or do anything with them.

```
find . -name "*.png" -type f -print | xargs tar -cvzf pics.tar.gz
```

Or maybe you have a list of URLs in a file and you want to download them or process them in a different way:

```
cat links.txt | xargs wget
```

The **cat** command result is passed to the end of **xargs** command.

What if your command needs the output in the middle?

Just use `{}` combined with `-i` parameter to replace the arguments in the place where the result should go like this:

```
ls /etc/*.conf | xargs -i cp {} ~/tmp/out/
```

## Redo last command as root


```
#as user  
vim /etc/fstab  
sudo !!
```

## Keyboard Shortcuts

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GNU\\_Readline](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/GNU_Readline)

Emacs editing mode key bindings are taken from the text editor Emacs.

On some systems, Esc must be used instead of Alt, because the Alt shortcut conflicts with another shortcut. For example, pressing Alt+f in Xfce's terminal emulator window does not move the cursor forward one word, but activates "File" in the menu of the terminal window, unless that is disabled in the emulator's settings.

- **Tab** : Autocompletes from the cursor position.
- **Ctrl+A**: Moves the cursor to the line start (equivalent to the key Home).
- **Ctrl+B**: Moves the cursor back one character (equivalent to the key ←).
- **Ctrl+C**: Sends the signal SIGINT via pseudoterminal to the current task, which aborts and closes it.[d]
- **Ctrl+D**
  - Sends an EOF marker, which (unless disabled by an option) closes the current shell (equivalent to the command exit). (Only if there is no text on the current line)
  - If there is text on the current line, deletes the current character (then equivalent to the key Delete).
- **Ctrl+E**: (end) moves the cursor to the line end (equivalent to the key End).
- **Ctrl+F**: Moves the cursor forward one character (equivalent to the key →).
- **Ctrl+G**: Abort the reverse search and restore the original line.
- **Ctrl+H**: Deletes the previous character (same as backspace).
- **Ctrl+I**: Equivalent to the tab key.

- **Ctrl+J** : Equivalent to the enter key.
- **Ctrl+K** : Clears the line content after the cursor and copies it into the clipboard.
- **Ctrl+L** : Clears the screen content (equivalent to the command clear).
- **Ctrl+N** : (next) recalls the next command (equivalent to the key ↓).
- **Ctrl+O** : Executes the found command from history, and fetch the next line relative to the current line from the history for editing.
- **Ctrl+P** : (previous) recalls the prior command (equivalent to the key ↑).
- **Ctrl+R** : (reverse search) recalls the last command including the specified characters. A second Ctrl+r recalls the next anterior command that corresponds to the search
- **Ctrl+S** : Go back to the next more recent command of the reverse search (beware to not execute it from a terminal because this command also launches its XOFF). If you changed that XOFF setting, use Ctrl+q to return.
- **Ctrl+T** : Transpose the previous two characters.
- **Ctrl+U** : Clears the line content before the cursor and copies it into the clipboard.
- **Ctrl+V** : If the next input is also a control sequence, type it literally (e. g. \* Ctrl+v Ctrl+h types “^H”, a literal backspace.)
- **Ctrl+W** : Clears the word before the cursor and copies it into the clipboard.
- **Ctrl+X Ctrl+E** : Edits the current line in the \$EDITOR program, or vi if undefined.
- **Ctrl+X Ctrl+R** : Read in the contents of the inputrc file, and incorporate any bindings or variable assignments found there.
- **Ctrl+X Ctrl+U** : Incremental undo, separately remembered for each line.
- **Ctrl+X Ctrl+V** : Display version information about the current instance of Bash.
- **Ctrl+X Ctrl+X** : Alternates the cursor with its old position. (C-x, because x has a crossing shape).
- **Ctrl+Y** : (yank) adds the clipboard content from the cursor position.
- **Ctrl+Z** : Sends the signal SIGTSTP to the current task, which suspends it. To execute it in background one can enter bg. To bring it back from background or suspension fg ['process name or job id'] (foreground) can be issued.
- **Ctrl+\_** : Incremental undo, separately remembered for each line.
- **Alt+B** : (backward) moves the cursor backward one word.
- **Alt+C** : Capitalizes the character under the cursor and moves to the end of the word.
- **Alt+D** : Cuts the word after the cursor.
- **Alt+F** : (forward) moves the cursor forward one word.
- **Alt+L** : Lowers the case of every character from the cursor's position to the end of the current word.
- **Alt+R** : Cancels the changes and puts back the line as it was in the history.
- **Alt+U** : Capitalizes every character from the cursor's position to the end of the current word.
- **Alt+\_** : Insert the last argument to the previous command (the last word of the previous history entry).

## RAMdisk

```
mkdir -pv /mnt/ram
mount -t tmpfs tmpfs /mnt/ram -o size=8192M
```

## Prevent command from appearing in history

just type a leading `Space`

```
echo "SUPERSAFEPASSWORD" > ~/mypassword.txt
^- this is SPACE
```

## Edit/change last typed command

```
vim /home/wronguser/.bashrc
fc

# or
^wronguser^correctuser
```

~~DISCUSSION~~

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