



Basic Usage

Starting top

To start the <code>top</code> command, simply type <code>top</code> in your terminal.
<code>top</code>
The display updates periodically, showing a snapshot of the system's processes.

Understanding the Display

The <code>top</code> display is divided into two main sections:
1. <b>Summary Area:</b> Displays overall system statistics.
2. <b>Task Area:</b> Lists the processes being managed by the kernel.

Summary Area Fields

<b>uptime</b>	Shows how long the system has been running, the number of logged-in users, and the system load average.
<b>Tasks</b>	Displays the total number of tasks, along with their statuses (running, sleeping, stopped, zombie).
<b>%Cpu(s)</b>	Shows CPU usage statistics (user, system, idle, etc.).
<b>KiB Mem</b>	Displays memory usage (total, free, used, buffer/cache).
<b>KiB Swap</b>	Shows swap space usage.

Interactive Commands

Basic Commands

<code>h</code>	Displays the help menu.
<code>q</code>	Quits the <code>top</code> program.
<code>1</code>	Shows CPU usage per core (if supported).

Sorting Processes

<code>Shift + p</code>	Sorts processes by CPU usage (descending).
<code>Shift + m</code>	Sorts processes by memory usage (descending).
<code>Shift + n</code>	Sorts processes by PID (Process ID).
<code>Shift + r</code>	Reverses the sorting order.
<code>Shift + t</code>	Sorts processes by runtime.

Filtering Processes

<code>u</code>	Filters processes by username. Prompts for a username.
<code>o</code>	Adds a filter based on other fields. Prompts for a filter condition.
<code>=</code>	Clears all active filters.

Process Management

Killing Processes

<code>k</code>	Kills a process. Prompts for the PID of the process to kill and the signal to send (default is 15, SIGTERM).
Example	To kill a process with PID 1234 using the default SIGTERM signal:  1. Press <code>k</code> . 2. Enter <code>1234</code> when prompted for the PID. 3. Press Enter to accept the default signal (15).

Changing Priority (Renice)

<code>r</code>	Renices a process. Prompts for the PID of the process and the new nice value.
Note	Only root can increase the priority (lower the nice value) of a process.
Example	To renice a process with PID 5678 to a nice value of 10:  1. Press <code>r</code> . 2. Enter <code>5678</code> when prompted for the PID. 3. Enter <code>10</code> when prompted for the new nice value.

Advanced Features

Customizing Display Fields

<code>f</code>	Adds or removes fields from the task display. Allows you to customize which columns are shown.
<code>d</code> or <code>s</code>	Changes the delay time between screen updates in seconds. <code>d</code> prompts for the new delay, <code>s</code> toggles between preset delays. Default is 3 seconds.

Alternate Displays

<code>v</code>	Toggles forest view, showing parent-child relationships between processes.
<code>c</code>	Toggles the display of the full command path instead of just the command name.
<code>Shift + l</code>	Search for the string.

## Command Line Options

`top -u <username>` : Starts top, displaying only processes owned by `<username>`.

### Example:

```
top -u www-data
```

`top -p <pid>` : Starts top, displaying only the process with PID `<pid>`.

### Example:

```
top -p 1234
```

`top -n <number>` : Exits after `<number>` iterations.

### Example:

```
top -n 5
```

`top -b` : Batch mode operation