

# htop Cheatsheet

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Quick reference for monitoring processes, sorting tasks, filtering output, and managing processes with htop in Linux

The `htop` command is an interactive process viewer for Linux with color-coded meters, search, filtering, tree view, and keyboard shortcuts for managing processes. This cheatsheet covers the most useful startup options, navigation keys, sorting controls, process actions, and display settings.

## Basic Usage

Start `htop` and limit the view when needed.

|                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <code>htop</code>              | Start <code>htop</code> with the default interactive view |
| <code>htop -u username</code>  | Show only processes owned by one user                     |
| <code>htop -p 1234,5678</code> | Monitor only the specified PIDs                           |
| <code>htop -t</code>           | Start in tree view  |
| <code>sudo htop</code>         | Run with elevated privileges to manage more processes     |

## Navigation and Search

Move around the process list and find what you need quickly.

|                     |                                       |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Arrow keys          | Move up and down through processes    |
| Page Up / Page Down | Scroll one page at a time             |
| Home / End          | Jump to the top or bottom of the list |
| F3 or /             | Search for a process by name          |
| F4 or \             | Filter the process list               |
| Space               | Tag or untag the selected process     |
| U                   | Clear all tags                        |

## Sorting and Views

Change how processes are grouped and sorted.

|                                  |                                  |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| P                                | Sort by CPU usage                |
| M                                | Sort by memory usage             |
| T                                | Sort by running time             |
| F5                               | Toggle tree view                 |
| F6                               | Choose a sort column             |
| <code>htop -s PERCENT_MEM</code> | Start sorted by memory usage     |
| H                                | Toggle display of user threads   |
| K                                | Toggle display of kernel threads |

## Process Actions

Manage processes directly from inside `htop`.

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| F7         | Decrease nice value (raise priority)                |
| F8         | Increase nice value (lower priority)                |
| F9         | Send a signal to the selected process               |
| 15 SIGTERM | Ask a process to exit cleanly                       |
| 9 SIGKILL  | Force a process to stop immediately                 |
| 2 SIGINT   | Interrupt a process, similar to <code>Ctrl+C</code> |
| q or F10   | Quit <code>htop</code>                              |

## Startup Options

Useful options for changing the initial view.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <code>htop -d 20</code>                  | Refresh every 2 seconds                 |
| <code>htop -C</code>                     | Use monochrome mode                     |
| <code>htop -H</code>                     | Highlight new and old processes         |
| <code>htop --readonly</code>             | Disable process-kill and renice actions |
| <code>htop --sort-key PERCENT_CPU</code> | Start sorted by CPU usage               |

## Customization

Adjust the display and save the layout.

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| F2                    | Open the setup menu                                    |
| Columns               | Add, remove, or reorder process columns                |
| Meters                | Change header meters and display style                 |
| Display options       | Toggle tree lines, thread names, and other UI settings |
| ~/.config/htop/htoprc | Configuration file where settings are saved            |

## Troubleshooting

Quick checks for common `htop` issues.

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| htop: command not found   | Install <code>htop</code> with <code>apt</code> or <code>dnf</code> first                    |
| Cannot renice a process   | Run <code>htop</code> with <code>sudo</code> to change priorities for other users' processes |
| Cannot kill a process     | Confirm you have permission, then use <code>F9</code> with <code>SIGTERM</code> first        |
| Process list is too noisy | Use <code>F4</code> to filter or start with <code>-u USER</code>                             |
| Fast processes disappear  | Lower the update interval with <code>-d</code>   |

## Related Guides

Use these guides for the full walkthroughs.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <a href="#">htop Command in Linux</a>   | Full <code>htop</code> guide with examples           |
| <a href="#">top Command in Linux</a>    | Monitor processes in real time with <code>top</code> |
| <a href="#">ps Command in Linux</a>     | List and inspect processes                           |
| <a href="#">kill Command in Linux</a>   | Send signals to processes by PID                     |
| <a href="#">pstree Command in Linux</a> | View parent and child process relationships          |