

# timedatectl Cheatsheet

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Quick reference for checking time status, changing time zones, controlling NTP sync, and setting the system clock with `timedatectl`

`timedatectl` is the `systemd` command-line tool for viewing and changing the system time, date, time zone, RTC settings, and NTP synchronization. This cheatsheet covers the most useful commands for day-to-day time management and troubleshooting.

## Basic Status

Check the current time, date, time zone, and sync state.

<code>timedatectl</code>	Show current time, time zone, and NTP status
<code>timedatectl status</code>	Show the same formatted status explicitly
<code>timedatectl show</code>	Show status in key-value format
<code>timedatectl show --property=Timezone --value</code>	Print the current time zone only
<code>timedatectl show --property=NTPSynchronized --value</code>	Print whether the clock is synchronized

## Time Zones

List and change time zone settings.

<code>timedatectl list-timezones</code>	List all available time zones
<code>timedatectl list-timezones   grep -i berlin</code>	Filter the time zone list
<code>sudo timedatectl set-timezone Europe/Berlin</code>	Set the system time zone
<code>sudo timedatectl set-timezone Etc/UTC</code>	Switch the system back to UTC
<code>timedatectl show --property=Timezone --value</code>	Confirm the current time zone in scripts

## NTP Synchronization

Enable, disable, and inspect time synchronization.

<code>sudo timedatectl set-ntp true</code>	Enable automatic time sync
<code>sudo timedatectl set-ntp false</code>	Disable automatic time sync
<code>timedatectl timesync-status</code>	Show the current NTP server, offset, and poll interval
<code>timedatectl show-timesync</code>	Show timesync details in key-value format
<code>timedatectl show --property=NTP --value</code>	Show whether NTP is enabled

## Set Time and Date

Disable NTP first when setting the clock manually.

<code>sudo timedatectl set-ntp false</code>	Turn off NTP before manual changes
<code>sudo timedatectl set-time '2026-04-21 14:30:00'</code>	Set both date and time
<code>sudo timedatectl set-time '14:30:00'</code>	Set the time only
<code>sudo timedatectl set-time '2026-04-21'</code>	Set the date only
<code>sudo timedatectl set-ntp true</code>	Re-enable NTP after manual changes

## RTC and Hardware Clock

Control whether the RTC uses UTC or local time.

<code>timedatectl show --property=LocalRTC --value</code>	Check whether the RTC uses local time
<code>sudo timedatectl set-local-rtc 0</code>	Set the RTC to UTC
<code>sudo timedatectl set-local-rtc 1</code>	Set the RTC to local time
<code>sudo timedatectl set-local-rtc 1 --adjust-system-clock</code>	Switch RTC mode and adjust the system clock
<code>timedatectl</code>	Confirm the <b>RTC in local TZ</b> status line

## Script-Friendly Output

Extract single values for shell scripts and automation.

<code>timedatectl show --property=Timezone --value</code>	Get the current time zone
<code>timedatectl show --property=LocalRTC --value</code>	Get the RTC mode
<code>timedatectl show --property=CanNTP --value</code>	Check whether NTP is supported
<code>timedatectl show --property=NTP --value</code>	Check whether NTP is enabled
<code>timedatectl show --property=NTPSynchronized --value</code>	Check whether the clock is synchronized

## Remote and Container Use

Run `timedatectl` against another host or a local container.

<code>timedatectl -H user@server status</code>	Check time settings on a remote host over SSH
<code>timedatectl -H root@server set-timezone UTC</code>	Change the remote host time zone
<code>timedatectl -M mycontainer status</code>	Check time settings in a local container
<code>timedatectl -M mycontainer show --property=Timezone --value</code>	Print the container time zone only

## Quick Fixes

Use these when `timedatectl` does not behave as expected.

<code>sudo timedatectl set-ntp false</code>	Fix <b>Automatic time synchronization is enabled</b> before <code>set-time</code>
<code>timedatectl timesync-status</code>	Check which server is syncing the clock
<code>timedatectl --no-pager</code>	Print directly without opening a pager
<code>sudo date -s '2026-04-21 14:30:00'</code>	Set the clock on non-systemd systems where <code>timedatectl</code> does not work

## Related Guides

Use these articles for deeper explanations and step-by-step instructions.

<a href="#">How to Set or Change the Time Zone in Linux</a>	Change the system time zone with <code>timedatectl</code> , <code>tzdata</code> , or <code>/etc/localtime</code>
<a href="#">date Command in Linux</a>	Read and set the system clock with the traditional <code>date</code> command
<a href="#">journalctl Cheatsheet</a>	Inspect time sync and service logs from the systemd journal