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How to: Linux delete or remove kernel

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Q. I have multiple versions installed and I need to save disk space. I am using Cent OS Linux. How can I delete or remove a Linux kernel from my Linux distribution ?

A. Linux Kernel and related files are stored in following locations:

=> **/boot** - Stores actual kernel and related file such system man and initrd images,

=> **/etc** or **/boot/grub** - Stores grub.conf file (most distro use /boot/grub these days).

=> **/lib/modules/KERNEL-VERSION/*** - Linux device drivers (modules)

If kernel is installed using binary package system such as rpm, yum, up2date, apt-get etc you can remove with following commands:

Rpm based distro - Red Hat/CentOS/Fedora Core/Suse Linux

First find out all installed kernel version with following command:

```
# rpm -qa | grep kernel-smp
```

or

```
# rpm -qa | grep kernel
```

Output:

```
kernel-smp-2.6.9-42.EL
kernel-smp-2.6.9-42.0.3.EL
kernel-smp-2.6.9-42.0.8.EL
```

I've total 3 different kernel installed. To remove kernel-smp-2.6.9-42.EL type command:

```
# rpm -e kernel-smp-2.6.9-42.EL
```

OR

```
# rpm -vv -e kernel-smp-2.6.9-42.EL
```

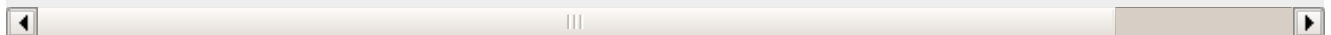
.deb based distro - Debian or Ubuntu Linux

Again find out all installed kernel version:

```
$ dpkg --get-selections | grep kernel-image
```

Output:

```
ii kernel-image-2.4.27-2-386 2.4.27-10sarge1 Linux kernel image for version
ii kernel-image-2.6.8-2-686 2.6.8-16sarge1 Linux kernel image for version
```



Now remove kernel-image-2.4.27-2-386 with apt-get command itself:

```
# apt-get remove kernel-image-2.4.27-2-386
```

OR

```
$ sudo apt-get remove kernel-image-2.4.27-2-386
```

If you have custom compiled kernel you need to remove following files/dirs:

- /boot/vmlinuz***KERNEL-VERSION***
- /boot/initrd***KERNEL-VERSION***
- /boot/System-map***KERNEL-VERSION***
- /boot/config-***KERNEL-VERSION***
- /lib/modules/***KERNEL-VERSION**/*
- Update grub configuration file /etc/grub.conf or /boot/grub/menu.lst to point to correct kernel version.

Caution: Removing working kernel may result into unstable / non- bootable Linux server system.

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