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Reset the password in Ubuntu / Linux Bash in Windows

Asked 5 years ago Active 4 months ago Viewed 260k times



279



122



I have installed Linux Bash on Windows 10 (available from Microsoft), but I've forgotten my password.

I've searched for a solution but I only find suggestions that involve doing something before the system boots, like accessing recovery mode, but that will not work in this case as this Ubuntu is just an application within a Windows system and doesn't have its own boot process.

How can I reset my password?

[password-recovery](#)

[windows-subsystem-for-linux](#)

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edited Oct 11 '18 at 7:59



Zanna ♦

62.7k 51 176 294

asked May 13 '16 at 22:19



Maheedhar K V

2,891 3 8 4

4 Which password did you lose exactly? Your Windows account password? – [David Foerster](#) Aug 6 '16 at 12:08

an example "booting option" would be to boot to single user mode by setting kernel cmdline to "single" via grub. For those curious. – [Kevin](#) Jun 28 '17 at 16:53

6 Answers

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439



- Run `bash` and make a note of your Linux username (this need not match your Windows username), see [How can I find out my user name?](#)
- Close Bash on Ubuntu if it is running (or the next command will fail).
- In Windows admin command prompt (`Super` + `X`, `A`) change the default user to root:

```
ubuntu config --default-user root
```

If you are using Ubuntu 18.04 in WSL, the command has changed to `ubuntu1804` , so

```
ubuntu1804 config --default-user root
```

- Now Bash on Ubuntu on Windows logs you in as root without asking password
- Use `passwd` command in Bash to change the user password (the user whose password you want to reset):

```
passwd your_username
```

- Change the default user back to your normal user in Windows command prompt

```
ubuntu config --default-user your_username
```

If you are using Ubuntu 18.04 in WSL, the command has changed to `ubuntu1804` , so

```
ubuntu1804 config --default-user your_username
```

Watch Full Video to Recover your password Windows Subsystem Linux

<https://youtu.be/dTR232yvDCE>

Note 1: The subsystem used in the video is not Ubuntu, but Kali Linux. Hence the difference in the command.

Note 2: If you are still using the original Ubuntu subsystem that came with the Anniversary Update, use the command `lxrun`. Upgrade to the subsystem version distributed via Microsoft Store is recommended.)

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edited Jun 8 '18 at 15:24



Panther

93.1k 17 181 271

answered Aug 5 '16 at 10:02






Tmu

4,499 1 8 4

7 `lxrun` is for beta version of WSL. If you install ubuntu from the app store, the command is `ubuntu config`

--default-user root . – [Endy Tjahjono](#) Nov 19 '17 at 9:13

- 2 Yeah, this is an alternative way but I got the error: Failed to set default user to: root . – [Kirby](#) Dec 17 '17 at 7:47
- 3 @Kirby: you must log out from the WSL shell before running the command in the Windows command prompt. – [dr_](#) Mar 22 '18 at 9:16
- 1 I kept getting Error: 0x80070057 The parameter is incorrect , so I ended up following @dr01 's cue and ran `ubuntu` in PowerShell, then `logout` , then configured the default user again. Success 👍 – [skia.heliou](#) Jun 7 '18 at 13:42 ✎
- 3 If you installed ubuntu 18.04 on WSL, the command is `ubuntu1804` instead of `ubuntu` . Hope this saves some head-scratching. – [Indominus](#) Jun 8 '18 at 3:43 ✎

In Windows PowerShell ( +  , ) you can log in to the Ubuntu root account with

86

```
wsl --user root
```

Then change the password as you usually would, i.e. for the current user (which is root) with

```
passwd
```

or for another user with

```
passwd username
```

which interactively asks you for a new password (twice). Windows admin privileges are not required.

If you have more than one distribution installed in WSL, then you can list the names of the installed distributions with

```
wsl -l
```

and then use the name of the distribution to specify into which distribution you want to log in to, for example to log into Ubuntu 20.04:

```
wsl -d Ubuntu-20.04 --user root
```


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edited Jan 2 at 13:51

answered Sep 5 '19 at 9:58

[Nobody](#)

1,222 8 15

- 1 Awesome! This works as of 10/2019. And, very important, this prompt command works even without administrator privileges on the Windows machine (that's a time- and money-saver if you're on a company PC). – **Damien Pirsy** Oct 14 '19 at 10:08
-
- 1 That change root password - yes, after it just launch Ubuntu under Windows and under console type: \$ su root # passwd YOUR_ACCOUNT_NAME – **dawciobi** Nov 28 '19 at 23:01 
-
- Didn't work on the VM because I don't know the old password. – **Gringo Suave** Dec 8 '19 at 0:58
-
- 1 @GringoSuave When you are root it doesn't ask for a password. Did you skip the first step or add additional ones in between? – **Nobody** Dec 8 '19 at 17:30
-
- 3 Yes, figured it out. Had to use `passwd user`. Thanks. – **Gringo Suave** Dec 8 '19 at 17:31
-



The above did not work. Even after changing default user, Bash always opened with my user.

73

So instead I did this, which worked:



1. Edit this file (in notepad or notepad++):



```
%localappdata%\lxss\rootfs\etc\shadow
```

2. Find your normal user, for example:

```
user1:$jsdjksadgfhdsf.saf1sdf.sadf.safd:17299:0:99999:7:::
```

and simply remove the hash part (below part)

```
$jsdjksadgfhdsf.saf1sdf.sadf.safd
```

you will see a different hash - I hope :) so it should look like:

```
user1::17299:0:99999:7:::
```

3. Save the file
4. Start Bash again with root privileges and set your password

```
sudo bash
passwd <your-user-name>
```

You can now set a new password without having to enter the previous one.

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edited Oct 11 '18 at 9:22



Zanna ♦

62.7k

51

176

294

answered May 13 '17 at 15:59



Vladimir Jirasek

839


6


3

- 15 this works but the official directory is now similar to

```
%localappdata%\Packages\CanonicalGroupLimited.UbuntuonWindows_79rhkp1fndgsc\LocalState\rootfs\etc\shadow
```

– **Mauro Destro** Dec 21 '17 at 8:13

- 14 This is the best answer *by far*. To find the path to your `shadow` file you can use this PowerShell abomination: `Get-ChildItem -Path C:\ -Filter shadow -Recurse -ErrorAction SilentlyContinue -Force` which is an insanely verbose version of `find /mnt/c/ -name shadow` in both execution and results. No need for elevated privileges to edit the file, but make sure your bash window is closed before you do it. – Russ Jan 4 '18 at 5:29 
- 2 This is the winner! Worked great when the first answer did not. – Kim Mar 15 '18 at 15:29
- 1 The accepted answer got me 'Error: 0x80070057 The parameter is incorrect.'. (and no, the console was not in legacy mode). This worked seamlessly; – Cristian Diaconescu May 24 '18 at 10:00
- 1 This answer worked exactly as outlined above. The first answer did not work for me. – Shanemeister Feb 20 '19 at 15:01

 **Edit** This no longer works if you have a store-installed distribution of WSL.

28 To add to Tmu's answer, here's a Powershell script ([gist](#)) that automates the process (including automatically detecting the current default username)



```
# Resets the password for the default LXSS / WSL bash user
$lxssUsername = (Get-ItemProperty
HKCU:\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Lxss).DefaultUsername
lxrun /setdefaultuser root
bash -c "passwd $lxssUsername"
lxrun /setdefaultuser $lxssUsername
```

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edited Aug 7 '19 at 23:04

answered Jun 6 '17 at 23:52



Richard Szalay

381 3 4

getting Error: 0x80070002 in powershell – Nitin S Mar 5 '19 at 6:45

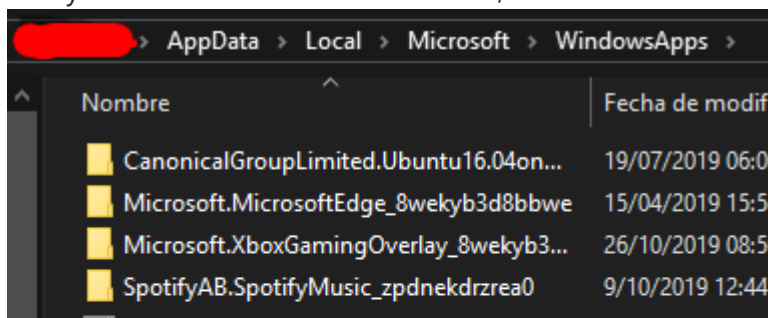
 I needed to reset my password also in my Windows 10, I has WLS 1

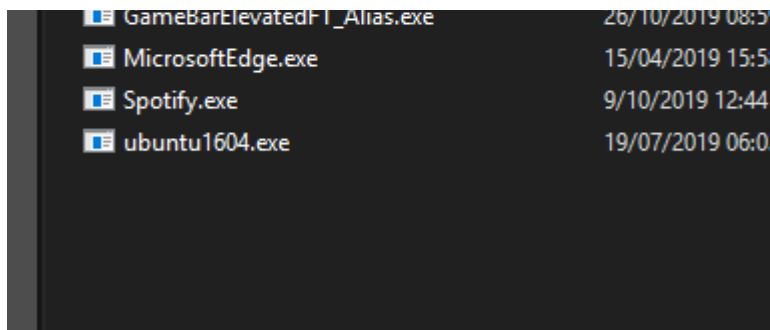
3 1- Check your linux/ubuntu name, listing the folder:

%userprofile%\AppData\Local\Microsoft\WindowsApps



In my case I found **Ubuntu1604.exe**, so I will use **ubuntu1604** like name for the next step.





2- Open CMD with administrator privileges and run (you will get nothing in return):

```
ubuntu1604 config --default-user root
```

3- Start your WSL, check that you get root privileges or run `whoami` (you need to be root) and change your password with:

```
passwd [your-linux-username]
```

4- Close your WSL and get back to the CMD Window and set back your default linux username:

```
ubuntu1604 config --default-user [your-linux-username]
```

5- Start your WSL/Ubuntu/AnotherLinux again, check and enjoy.

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answered Oct 27 '19 at 17:37



Jorgeee

213 2 7



0



For those of you who lost the root password, what worked for me, was updating to Ubuntu 18.04 LTS via the Windows Store. Note, the windows store has two distinct options:

1. Ubuntu
2. Ubuntu 18.04 LTS (**Pick this one**)

To check your current version, run the following as any user:

At command prompt, enter:

```
cat /etc/*release
```

You should see a line in the output that says:

```
DISTRIB_RELEASE=16.01
```

If you see that, then definitely [update to 18.04](#), and it will prompt you to create new UNIX credentials.

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edited Aug 2 '19 at 4:41



stackunderflow232315

103 3

answered Mar 15 '19 at 1:24



Janac Meena

133 5



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