



```
$ ps -f -u wmorales
```

```
$ ps aux --sort=-pcpu,+pmem
```

```
$ ps aux --sort=-pcpu | head -5
```

```
$ ps -f --forest
```

```
$ ps -e -o pid,uname,pcpu,pmem,comm
```

```
$ ps -e -o pid,uname=USERNAME,pcpu=CPU_USAGE,pmem,comm
```

```
$ ps -e -o pid,comm,etime
```

```
$ watch -n 1 'ps -e -o pid,uname,cmd,pmem,pcpu --sort=-pmem,-pcpu | head -15'
```

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## How to use ps command

### 1. Display all processes

The following command will give a full list of processes

```
$ ps ax
```

Pipe the output to "less" to make it scrollable.

```
PID TTY STAT TIME COMMAND
```

```
1 ? Ss 0:02 /sbin/init showopts
```

```
2 ? S 0:00 [kthreadd]
```

```
3 ? S 0:00 [ksoftirqd/0]
```

```
5 ? S< 0:00 [kworker/0:0H]
```

```
7 ? S 0:00 [migration/0]
```

```
8 ? S 0:00 [rcuc/0]
```

```
9 ? S 0:00 [rcub/0]
```

```
10 ? S 0:01 [rcu_preempt]
```

```
----- cut -----
```

```
$ ps -ef
```

```
UID PID PPID C STIME TTY TIME CMD
```

```

root    1    0 0 Oct30 ?    00:00:02 /sbin/init showopts
root    2    0 0 Oct30 ?    00:00:00 [kthreadd]
root    3    2 0 Oct30 ?    00:00:00 [ksoftirqd/0]
root    5    2 0 Oct30 ?    00:00:00 [kworker/0:0H]
root    7    2 0 Oct30 ?    00:00:00 [migration/0]
root    8    2 0 Oct30 ?    00:00:00 [rcuc/0]
root    9    2 0 Oct30 ?    00:00:00 [rcub/0]
root   10    2 0 Oct30 ?    00:00:01 [rcu_preempt]
root   11    2 0 Oct30 ?    00:00:01 [rcuop/0]
root   12    2 0 Oct30 ?    00:00:01 [rcuop/1]
root   13    2 0 Oct30 ?    00:00:00 [rcu_bh]
root   14    2 0 Oct30 ?    00:00:00 [rcuob/0]
root   15    2 0 Oct30 ?    00:00:00 [rcuob/1]
root   16    2 0 Oct30 ?    00:00:00 [rcu_sched]

```

Use the "u" option or "-f" option to display detailed information about the processes

```
$ ps aux
```

USER	PID	%CPU	%MEM	VSZ	RSS	TTY	STAT	START	TIME	COMMAND
root	1	0.0	0.1	48356	4524	?	Ss	Oct30	0:02	/sbin/init show
root	2	0.0	0.0	0	0	?	S	Oct30	0:00	[kthreadd]
root	3	0.0	0.0	0	0	?	S	Oct30	0:00	[ksoftirqd/0]
root	5	0.0	0.0	0	0	?	S<	Oct30	0:00	[kworker/0:0H]
root	7	0.0	0.0	0	0	?	S	Oct30	0:00	[migration/0]
root	8	0.0	0.0	0	0	?	S	Oct30	0:00	[rcuc/0]
root	9	0.0	0.0	0	0	?	S	Oct30	0:00	[rcub/0]
root	10	0.0	0.0	0	0	?	S	Oct30	0:01	[rcu_preempt]
root	11	0.0	0.0	0	0	?	S	Oct30	0:01	[rcuop/0]
root	12	0.0	0.0	0	0	?	S	Oct30	0:01	[rcuop/1]
root	13	0.0	0.0	0	0	?	S	Oct30	0:00	[rcu_bh]

```

root      14 0.0 0.0      0      0 ?          S   Oct30    0:00 [rcuob/0]
root      15 0.0 0.0      0      0 ?          S   Oct30    0:00 [rcuob/1]
root      16 0.0 0.0      0      0 ?          S   Oct30    0:00 [rcu_sched]
root      17 0.0 0.0      0      0 ?          S   Oct30    0:00 [rcuos/0]
root      18 0.0 0.0      0      0 ?          S   Oct30    0:00 [rcuos/1]

```

```

----- cut -----

```

```
$ ps -ef f
```

UID	PID	PPID	C	STIME	TTY	TIME	CMD
root	1	0	0	Oct30	?	00:00:02	/sbin/init showopts
root	2	0	0	Oct30	?	00:00:00	[kthreadd]
root	3	2	0	Oct30	?	00:00:00	[ksoftirqd/0]
root	5	2	0	Oct30	?	00:00:00	[kworker/0:0H]
root	7	2	0	Oct30	?	00:00:00	[migration/0]
root	8	2	0	Oct30	?	00:00:00	[rcuc/0]
root	9	2	0	Oct30	?	00:00:00	[rcub/0]
root	10	2	0	Oct30	?	00:00:01	[rcu_preempt]
root	11	2	0	Oct30	?	00:00:01	[rcuop/0]
root	12	2	0	Oct30	?	00:00:01	[rcuop/1]
root	13	2	0	Oct30	?	00:00:00	[rcu_bh]
root	14	2	0	Oct30	?	00:00:00	[rcuob/0]
root	15	2	0	Oct30	?	00:00:00	[rcuob/1]

```

----- cut -----

```

Why is the USER column not displaying my username, but showing others like root, www-data etc ? For all usernames (including yours) if the length is greater than 8 characters then ps will fall back to show only the UID instead of username.

## 2. Display process by user

To filter the processes by the owning user use the "-u" option followed by the username. Multiple usernames can be provided separated by a comma.

```
$ ps -f -u wmorales
```

UID	PID	PPID	C	STIME	TTY	TIME	CMD
wmorales	1256	1253	0	18:05	?	00:00:00	sshd: wmorales@pts/5
wmorales	1257	1256	0	18:05	pts/5	00:00:00	-bash
wmorales	1600	1257	0	18:24	pts/5	00:00:00	script processexercise
wmorales	1602	1600	0	18:24	pts/5	00:00:00	script processexercise
wmorales	1603	1602	0	18:24	pts/4	00:00:00	bash -i
wmorales	1627	1603	0	18:26	pts/4	00:00:00	ps -f -u wmorales
wmorales	23848	1	0	Oct30	?	00:00:00	/usr/lib/systemd/systemd --user
wmorales	23850	23848	0	Oct30	?	00:00:00	(sd-pam)

### 3. Sort process by cpu or memory usage

System administrators often want to find out processes that are consuming lots of memory or CPU. The `sort` option will sort the process list based on a particular field or parameter.

Multiple fields can be specified with the `--sort` option separated by a comma. Additionally the fields can be prefixed with a `-` or `+` symbol indicating descending or ascending sort respectively. There are lots of parameters on which the process list can be sorted. Check the man page for the complete list.

```
$ ps aux --sort=-pcpu,+pmem
```

USER	PID	%CPU	%MEM	VSZ	RSS	TTY	STAT	START	TIME	COMMAND
root	2668	0.3	12.0	2131004	488488	?	Sl	Oct30	6:18	/usr/bin/gnome-
root	2760	0.1	0.4	218884	16388	?	S	Oct30	2:22	/usr/bin/vmtool
root	2	0.0	0.0	0	0	?	S	Oct30	0:00	[kthreadd]
root	3	0.0	0.0	0	0	?	S	Oct30	0:00	[ksoftirqd/0]
root	5	0.0	0.0	0	0	?	S<	Oct30	0:00	[kworker/0:0H]
root	7	0.0	0.0	0	0	?	S	Oct30	0:00	[migration/0]
root	8	0.0	0.0	0	0	?	S	Oct30	0:00	[rcuc/0]
root	9	0.0	0.0	0	0	?	S	Oct30	0:00	[rcub/0]
root	10	0.0	0.0	0	0	?	S	Oct30	0:01	[rcu_preempt]
root	11	0.0	0.0	0	0	?	S	Oct30	0:01	[rcuop/0]
root	12	0.0	0.0	0	0	?	S	Oct30	0:01	[rcuop/1]
root	13	0.0	0.0	0	0	?	S	Oct30	0:00	[rcu_bh]

```
----- cut -----
```

Display the top 5 processes consuming most of the cpu.

```
$ ps aux --sort=-pcpu | head -5
```

USER	PID	%CPU	%MEM	VSZ	RSS	TTY	STAT	START	TIME	COMMAND
root	2668	0.3	12.0	2131004	488488	?	Sl	Oct30	6:18	/usr/bin/gnome-shell
root	2760	0.1	0.4	218884	16388	?	S	Oct30	2:22	/usr/bin/vmtoolsd -n vmusr --blockFd 3
root	1	0.0	0.1	48356	4524	?	Ss	Oct30	0:02	/sbin/init showopts
root	2	0.0	0.0	0	0	?	S	Oct30	0:00	[kthreadd]

#### 4. Display process hierarchy in a tree style

Many processes are actually forked out of some parent process, and knowing this parent child relationship is often helpful. The '--forest' option will construct an ascii art style tree view of the process hierarchy.

The following command will search for processes by the name apache2 and construct a tree and display detailed information.

```
$ ps -f --forest
```

UID	PID	PPID	C	STIME	TTY	TIME	CMD
wmorales	1603	1602	0	18:24	pts/4	00:00:00	bash -i
wmorales	1677	1603	0	18:35	pts/4	00:00:00	\_ ps -f --forest

Try not to use any sorting with the tree style display, as they both effect the order of display in different ways.

#### 5. Change the columns to display

The ps command can be configured to show a selected list of columns only. There are a large number of columns to to show and the full list is available in the man pages.

The following command shows only the pid, username, cpu, memory and command columns.

```
$ ps -e -o pid,uname,pcpu,pmem,comm
```

PID	USER	%CPU	%MEM	COMMAND
1	root	0.0	0.1	systemd
2	root	0.0	0.0	kthreadd
3	root	0.0	0.0	ksoftirqd/0

```

5 root      0.0 0.0 kworker/0:0H
7 root      0.0 0.0 migration/0
8 root      0.0 0.0 rcuc/0
9 root      0.0 0.0 rcub/0
10 root     0.0 0.0 rcu_preempt
11 root     0.0 0.0 rcuop/0
12 root     0.0 0.0 rcuop/1
13 root     0.0 0.0 rcu_bh
14 root     0.0 0.0 rcuob/0
15 root     0.0 0.0 rcuob/1
16 root     0.0 0.0 rcu_sched

```

```
----- cut -----
```

It is possible to rename the column labels

```
$ ps -e -o pid,uname=USERNAME,pcpu=CPU_USAGE,pmem,comm
```

```
PID USERNAME CPU_USAGE %MEM COMMAND
```

```

1 root      0.0 0.1 systemd
2 root      0.0 0.0 kthreadd
3 root      0.0 0.0 ksoftirqd/0
5 root      0.0 0.0 kworker/0:0H
7 root      0.0 0.0 migration/0
8 root      0.0 0.0 rcuc/0
9 root      0.0 0.0 rcub/0
10 root     0.0 0.0 rcu_preempt
11 root     0.0 0.0 rcuop/0
12 root     0.0 0.0 rcuop/1
13 root     0.0 0.0 rcu_bh
14 root     0.0 0.0 rcuob/0
15 root     0.0 0.0 rcuob/1
16 root     0.0 0.0 rcu_sched
17 root     0.0 0.0 rcuos/0

```

```
----- cut -----
```

Quite flexible.

## 6. Display elapsed time of processes

The elapsed time indicates, how long the process has been running for. The column for elapsed time is not shown by default, and has to be brought in using the "-o" option

```
$ ps -e -o pid,comm,etime
```

PID	COMMAND	ELAPSED
1	systemd	1-11:10:28
2	kthreadd	1-11:10:28
3	ksoftirqd/0	1-11:10:28
5	kworker/0:0H	1-11:10:28
7	migration/0	1-11:10:28
8	rcuc/0	1-11:10:28
9	rcub/0	1-11:10:28
10	rcu_preempt	1-11:10:28
11	rcuop/0	1-11:10:28
12	rcuop/1	1-11:10:28
13	rcu_bh	1-11:10:28
14	rcuob/0	1-11:10:28
15	rcuob/1	1-11:10:28
16	rcu_sched	1-11:10:28

```
----- cut -----
```

## 7. Turn ps into an realtime process viewer

As usual, the watch command can be used to turn ps into a realtime process reporter. Simple example is like this

```
$ watch -n 1 'ps -e -o pid,uname,cmd,pmem,pcpu --sort=-pmem,-pcpu | head -15'
```

The output on my desktop is something like this.

```
Every 1.0s: ps -e -o pid,uname,cmd,pmem,pcpu --sort... Fri Oct 31 19:04:57 2014
```

PID	USER	CMD	%MEM	%CPU
-----	------	-----	------	------



```
2668 root      /usr/bin/gnome-shell      12.0 0.3
1572 vsan      /usr/sbin/clamd           7.6 0.0
12232 root      /usr/lib/YaST2/bin/y2base s 5.4 0.0
11973 root      gnome-control-center --over 1.1 0.0
2803 root      /usr/lib/evolution-data-ser 1.1 0.0
1547 root      /usr/bin/Xorg :0 -backgroun 0.9 0.0
2710 root      /usr/lib/evolution/3.10/evo 0.7 0.0
2593 root      /usr/lib/gnome-settings-dae 0.6 0.0
12008 root      /usr/lib/YaST2/bin/y2contro 0.5 0.0
2571 root      /usr/lib64/ibus/ibus-ui-gtk 0.5 0.0
2644 root      /usr/lib/goa-daemon        0.4 0.0
2810 root      /usr/lib/libsocialweb-core  0.4 0.0
2760 root      /usr/bin/vmtoolsd -n vmusr  0.4 0.1
2482 root      gdm-session-worker [pam/gdm 0.3 0.0
```

The output would be updated every 1 second to refresh the stats. However do not think that this is similar to top.

You would notice that the output of top/htop command changes much more frequently compared to the above ps command.

This is because the top output sorts on a value that is a mix of cpu usage and memory usage. But the above ps command sorts in a more simpler manner, taking 1 column at a time (like school maths). So it would not update rapidly like top.