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# Starting and Stopping Background Services with Homebrew

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I love <u>Homebrew</u>, but sometimes it really gets me down, you know? Especially when I have to deal with <u>launchetl</u>.

launchctl loads and unloads services that start at login. In OS X, these services are represented by files ending with .plist (which stands for "property list"). These plists are usually stored in either ~/Library/LaunchAgents or /Library/LaunchAgents. You load them (i.e. tell them to start at login) with launchctl load \$PATH\_TO\_LIST and unload them with launchctl unload \$PATH\_TO\_LIST. Loading a plist tells the program it represents (e.g. redis ) to start at login, while unloading it tells the program not to start at login.

This post-install message from Homebrew may look familiar:

Doing all that takes too long, and I can never remember where Homebrew plists are.

Fortunately, Homebrew includes a lovely interface for managing this without using In,

launchetl or knowing where plists are.

## brew services

First, install brew services by tapping homebrew/services (one time):

```
brew tap homebrew/services
```

Here's an example usage:

```
$ brew services start mysql
==> Successfully started `mysql` (label: homebrew.mxcl.mysql)
```

Behind the scenes, brew services start is doing everything in the post-install message above. First it runs ln -sfv ... for you. Then it runs launchctl load ~/Library/LaunchAgents/homebrew.mxcl.mysql.plist .It Just Works.

Let's say MySQL's acting funky. We can easily restart it:

```
brew services restart mysql
Stopping `mysql`... (might take a while)
==> Successfully stopped `mysql` (label: homebrew.mxcl.mysql)
==> Successfully started `mysql` (label: homebrew.mxcl.mysql)
```

Now let's see everything we've loaded:

memcached started 445 /Users/gabe/Library/LaunchAgents/homebrew.i mysql started 87538 /Users/gabe/Library/LaunchAgents/homebrew.i

Note that the list of services includes services you started with launchetl load, not just services you loaded with brew services.

Let's say we uninstalled MySQL and Homebrew didn't remove the plist for some reason (it usually removes it for you). There's a command for you:

```
$ brew services cleanup
Removing unused plist /Users/gabe/Library/LaunchAgents/homebrew.mxcl.my
```

Kachow.

# Hidden Homebrew commands

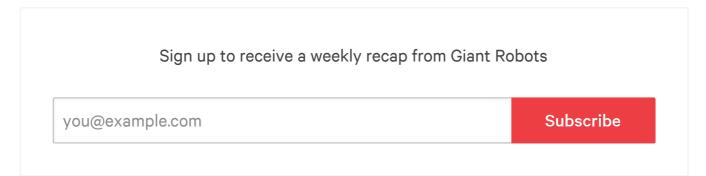
Homebrew ships with a whole bunch of commands that don't show up in brew --help.

You can see a list of them in the Homebrew git repo. Each file is named like

brew-COMMAND, and you run them with brew command. I recommend brew beer.

# What's next

If you liked this, I recommend reading through Homebrew's <u>Tips and Tricks</u>. You can also try out another Homebrew extension for installing Mac apps: <u>homebrew-cask</u>.



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