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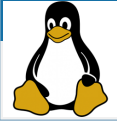
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## How to Set Linux Distribution version to WSL 1 or WSL 2 in Windows 10

Published by Shawn Brink  
12 Sep 2020

Category: Apps & Features

## How to Set Linux Distribution version to WSL 1 or WSL 2 in Windows 10

The **Windows Subsystem for Linux (WSL)** (aka: "WSL 1") lets developers run a GNU/Linux environment -- including most command-line tools, utilities, and applications -- directly on Windows, unmodified, without the overhead of a traditional virtual machine or dualboot setup.

**WSL 2** (Windows Subsystem for Linux 2) is a new version of the architecture in WSL that changes how Linux distributions interact with Windows. WSL 2 has the primary goals of increasing file system performance and adding full system call compatibility. Each Linux distribution can run as WSL 1 or as WSL 2, and can be switched between at any time. WSL 2 is a major overhaul of the underlying architecture and uses virtualization technology and a Linux kernel to enable its new features.

When you have **Windows Subsystem for Linux (WSL)** enabled, you can install Linux distribution apps from the Microsoft Store.

Users can make WSL 1 or WSL 2 the default architecture to be used as the default Linux distribution version whenever any **new Linux distributions are installed**.

Users can also set the Linux distribution version to WSL 1 or WSL 2 for **existing installed Linux distributions** at any time.

See also: [Set your distribution version to WSL 1 or WSL 2 | Microsoft Docs](#)

This tutorial will show you how to set the Linux distribution version to **WSL 1** or **WSL 2** for your account in **Windows 10**.

### Contents

- Option One:** Set Default Linux Distribution version to WSL 1 or WSL 2 for New Linux Distributions
- Option Two:** Set Linux Distribution version to WSL 1 or WSL 2 for Specific Installed Linux Distributions

### OPTION ONE

#### Set Default Linux Distribution version to WSL 1 or WSL 2 for New Linux Distributions

- 1 Open an **PowerShell**.
- 2 Copy and paste the command below you want to use into PowerShell, and press . (see screenshot below)

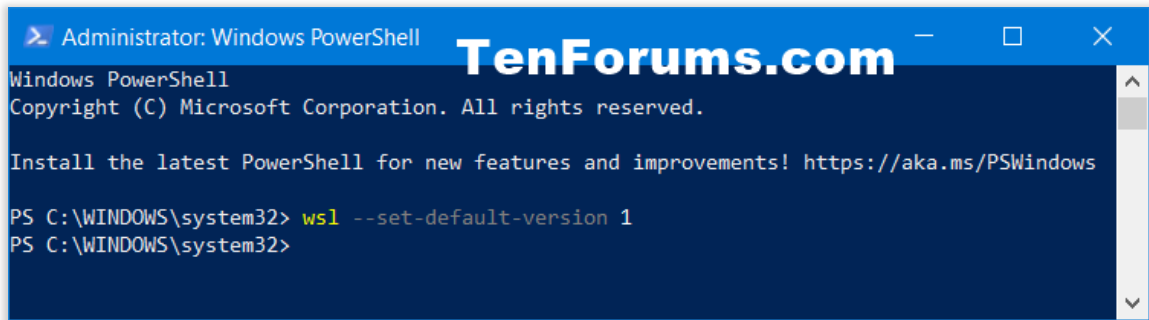
(Set **WSL 1** as default version)

```
ws1 --set-default-version 1
```

OR

(Set **WSL 2** as default version)

```
wsl --set-default-version 2
```



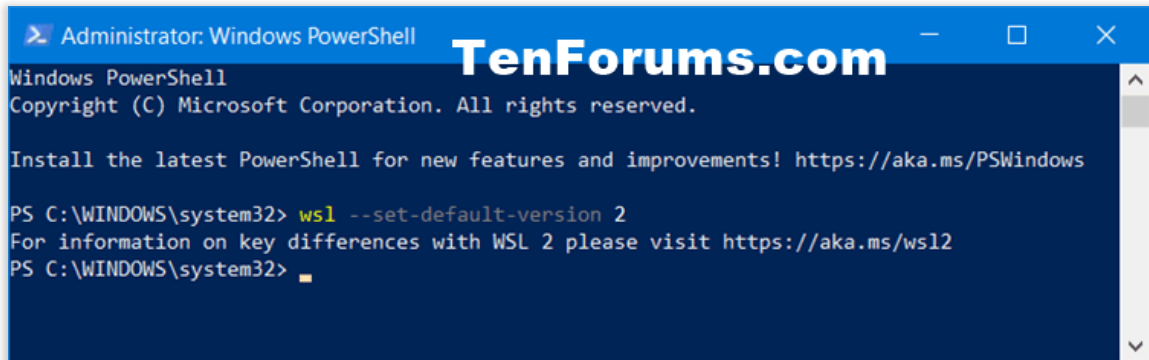
Administrator: Windows PowerShell

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```
PS C:\WINDOWS\system32> wsl --set-default-version 1
PS C:\WINDOWS\system32>
```



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```
PS C:\WINDOWS\system32> wsl --set-default-version 2
For information on key differences with WSL 2 please visit https://aka.ms/wsl2
PS C:\WINDOWS\system32>
```

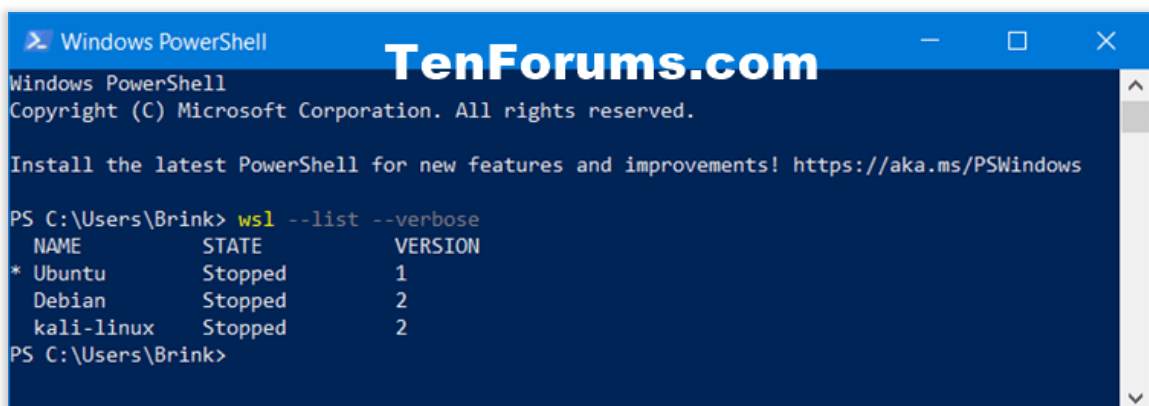
- 3 You can now close PowerShell if you like.

## OPTION TWO

### Set Linux Distribution version to WSL 1 or WSL 2 for Specific Installed Linux Distributions

- 1 Open an **PowerShell**.
- 2 Copy and paste the command below into PowerShell, press , and make note of the Linux distribution **name** (ex: "Ubuntu") you want to change the **version** (ex: "1" or "2") for. (see screenshot below)

```
wsl --list --verbose
```



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```
PS C:\Users\Brink> wsl --list --verbose
```

NAME	STATE	VERSION
* Ubuntu	Stopped	1
Debian	Stopped	2
kali-linux	Stopped	2

```
PS C:\Users\Brink>
```

- 3 Type the command below into PowerShell, and press . (see screenshots below)

```
wsl --set-version <distribution name> <versionNumber>
```

✍ Substitute **<distribution name>** in the command above with the actual Linux distribution **name** (ex: "Ubuntu") from **step 2**.

Substitute **<versionNumber>** in the command above with the number **1** (WSL 1) or **2** (WSL 2) for the default architecture you want.

For example: `wsl --set-version Ubuntu 2`

```
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PS C:\Users\Brink> wsl --list --verbose
NAME                STATE              VERSION
* Ubuntu            Stopped            2
  Debian            Stopped            2
  kali-linux         Running            2
PS C:\Users\Brink> wsl --set-version Ubuntu 1
Conversion in progress, this may take a few minutes...
Conversion complete.
PS C:\Users\Brink>
```

```
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PS C:\Users\Brink> wsl --list --verbose
NAME                STATE              VERSION
* Ubuntu            Stopped            1
  Debian            Stopped            2
  kali-linux         Stopped            2
PS C:\Users\Brink> wsl --set-version Ubuntu 2
Conversion in progress, this may take a few minutes...
For information on key differences with WSL 2 please visit https://aka.ms/wsl2
Conversion complete.
PS C:\Users\Brink>
```

4 You can now close PowerShell if you like.

That's it,  
Shawn

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- [How to Update from WSL to WSL 2 in Windows 10](#)
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- [How to Export and Import Windows Subsystem for Linux \(WSL\) Distro in Windows 10](#)
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