



How To Find a File In Linux From the Command Line

By [Elvis Plesky](#) | [April 5, 2021](#) | [Various](#)

 4 Minutes

Need to know how to **find a file in Linux**? Well, surprise, surprise, you're going to need the *find* command in Linux to scour your directory or file system. The Linux *find* command can filter objects recursively using a simple conditional mechanism, and if you use the `-exec` flag, you'll also be able to find a file in Linux straightaway and process it without needing to use another command.

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Locate Linux Files by Their Name or Extension



Typical Linux *Find* Commands and Syntax

find command expressions look like this:

```
find command options starting/path expression
```

The options attribute controls the behavior and optimization method of the *find* process. The *starting/path* attribute defines the top-level directory where the *find* command in Linux begins the filtering process. The *expression* attribute controls the assessments that scour the directory tree to create output.

Let's break down a Linux *find* command where we don't just want Linux *find* file by name:

```
find -O3 -L /var/www/ -name "*.html"
```

It enables the top-level optimization (-O3) and permits *find* to follow symbolic links (-L). The *find* command in Linux searches through the whole directory hierarchy under /var/www/ for files that have .html on the end.

Basic Examples

1. *find* . -name thisfile.txt

If you need to know how to find a file in Linux called thisfile.txt, it will look for it in current and sub-directories.

2. *find* /home -name *.jpg

Look for all .jpg files in the /home and directories below it.

3. *find* . -type f -empty

Look for an empty file inside the current directory.

4. *find* /home -user randomperson -mtime 6 -iname ".db"

Look for all .db files (ignoring text case) that have been changed in the preceding 6 days by a user called *randomperson*.

Options and Optimization for *Find* Command



find can help Linux find file by name. The Linux *find* command enhances its approach to filtering so that performance is optimised. The user can find a file in Linux by selecting three stages of optimisation -O1, -O2, and -O3. -O1 is the standard setting and it causes *find* to filter according to filename before it runs any other tests.

-O2 filters by name and type of file before carrying on with more demanding filters to find a file in Linux. Level -O3 reorders all tests according to their relative expense and how likely they are to succeed.

- **-O1** – (Default) filter based on file name first
- **-O2** – File name first, then file-type
- **-O3** – Allow find to automatically re-order the search based on efficient use of resources and likelihood of success
- **-maxdepth X** – Search this directory along with all sub-directories to a level of X
- **-iname** – Search while ignoring text case.
- **-not** – Only produce results that don't match the test case
- **-type f** – Look for files
- **-type d** – Look for directories

Find Files by When They Were Modified

The Linux *find* command contains the ability to filter a directory hierarchy based on when the file was last modified:

```
find / -name "*.jpg" -mtime 5
```

```
find /home/randomuser/ -name "*.jpg" -mtime 4
```

The initial Linux *find* command pulls up a list of files in the whole system that end with the characters *jpg* and have been modified in the preceding 5 days. The next one filters *randomuser*'s home directory for files with names that end with the characters "conf" and have been modified in the preceding 4 days.

Use Grep to Find Files Based on Content

The *find* command in Linux is great but it can only filter the directory tree according to filename and meta data. To search files based on what they contain you'll need a tool like *grep*. Take a



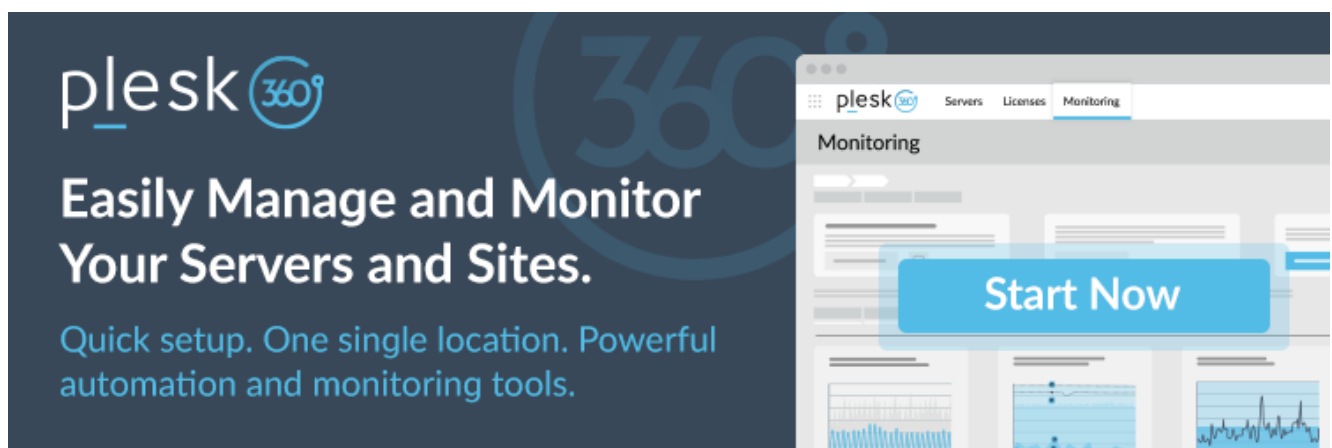
New Folder



runs `grep` for instance for every file that matches, then prints them on the screen (`-print`). The curly braces (`{}`) are a placeholder for those results matched by the Linux `find` command. The `{}` go inside single quotes (`'`) so that `grep` isn't given a misshapen file name. The `-exec` command is ended with a semicolon (`;`), which also needs an escape (`\;`) so that it doesn't end up being interpreted by the shell.

Before `-exec` was implemented, `xargs` would have been used to create the same kind of output:

```
find . -type f -print | xargs grep "forinstance"
```



How to Locate and Process Files Using the *Find* Command in Linux

The `-exec` option runs commands against every object that matches the `find` expression. Let's see how that looks:

```
find . -name "rc.conf" -exec chmod o+r '{}' \;
```

This filters all objects in the current directory tree (`.`) for files named `rc.conf` and runs the `chmod o+r` command to alter file permissions of the results that `find` returns.

The root directory of the Linux is where the commands that `-exec` runs are executed. Use `-execdir` to execute the command you want in the directory where the match is sitting, because this might be more secure and improve performance under certain circumstances.

The `-exec` or `-execdir` options will continue to run on their own, but if you'd like to see prompts before they do anything, swap out `-exec` `-ok` or `-execdir` for `-okdir`.



New Folder



1. On your machine, you need to take the folder with all of your website files on it and add it to a compressed archive in one of the usual formats (ZIP, RAR, TAR, TGZ, or TAR.GZ).
2. In Plesk, go to **Files**, click the httpdocs folder to open it, click **Upload**, choose the archive file, and then click **Open**.
3. As soon as you've uploaded it, click in the checkbox you see alongside and then on **Extract Files**.

How to Edit Files in File Manager

File Manager lets you edit your website pages by default. To do this you can use:

- An HTML editor or a "what-you-see-is-what-you-get" style of editor, which is a nice option because it adds the HTML tags for you. If you aren't all that confident with HTML then this can be a helpful option.
- Code editor. When you open HTML files with this one you'll be presented with text where the HTML syntax is highlighted. If you're comfortable with adding HTML tags yourself then code editor is for you.
- Text editor. HTML files are opened as ordinary text with this one.

Your Plesk administrator may have already set up the Rich Editor extension, in which case you can use it for HTML file editing. Rich Editor works in a what-you-see-is-what-you-get fashion, just like Code Editor, although it's better specced with features like a spellchecker for instance.

Here's how to use File Manager to edit a file:

1. Put the cursor over the file and the line that corresponds with it will show a highlight.
2. Open the context menu for the file by clicking on it.
3. Click **Edit in ... Editor** (this will vary depending on your chosen editor).

How to Change Permissions with File Manager

There are some web pages and files that you don't necessarily want to share with the world, and that's where altering their permissions settings can come in handy.

To achieve this, find the item you want to restrict Internet access for like this:

1. Place your cursor over it and wait for the highlight to appear as in the previous example.
2. Click on the file to open its context menu and do the same again on **Change Permissions**.





permissions in a recursive manner, assuming that your Plesk administrator set up the Permissions Recursive extension and that you understand the octal notation of file permissions.

To enable recursive editing of access permissions:

1. Place the cursor over the directory and wait for the highlight.
2. Click to open its context menu and then again on **Set Permissions Recursive**.
3. Now you can edit them. "Folder Permissions" is talking about the higher-level directory and any of its associated sub-directories. "File Permissions" applies to sub-files in this instance.
4. When you've completed your permission amendments, click **OK**.

File Search in File Manager

You've got a little bit of latitude with file searches. You can have File Manager hunt for a specific bit of text either in the file name, in the content, or in both. You can choose how you want it to search for files by clicking on the icon that appears adjacent to your chosen search field, and then clicking on whichever type you prefer.



Elvis Plesky

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3 Comments

darwin

OCT 31, 2021 / 10:46 AM # LINK

REPLY

find /home -name *.jpg doesn't work
try find /home -name "*.jpg"



New Folder



JAN 6, 2022 / 9:03 AM # LINK

REPLY

I need to copy all pdf files in a folder. I can create a list of pdf files in Plesk with file search “.pdf”, but that’s it, I can’t select and copy/move them. Anyone has a hint how to do this?

Louis Vanfraechem Moderator

JAN 19, 2022 / 12:40 PM # LINK

REPLY

Hi Katja,

We kindly suggest addressing your specific question to [the forum](#), where you can explore a variety of topics and make use of the experience of our friendly community.

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