

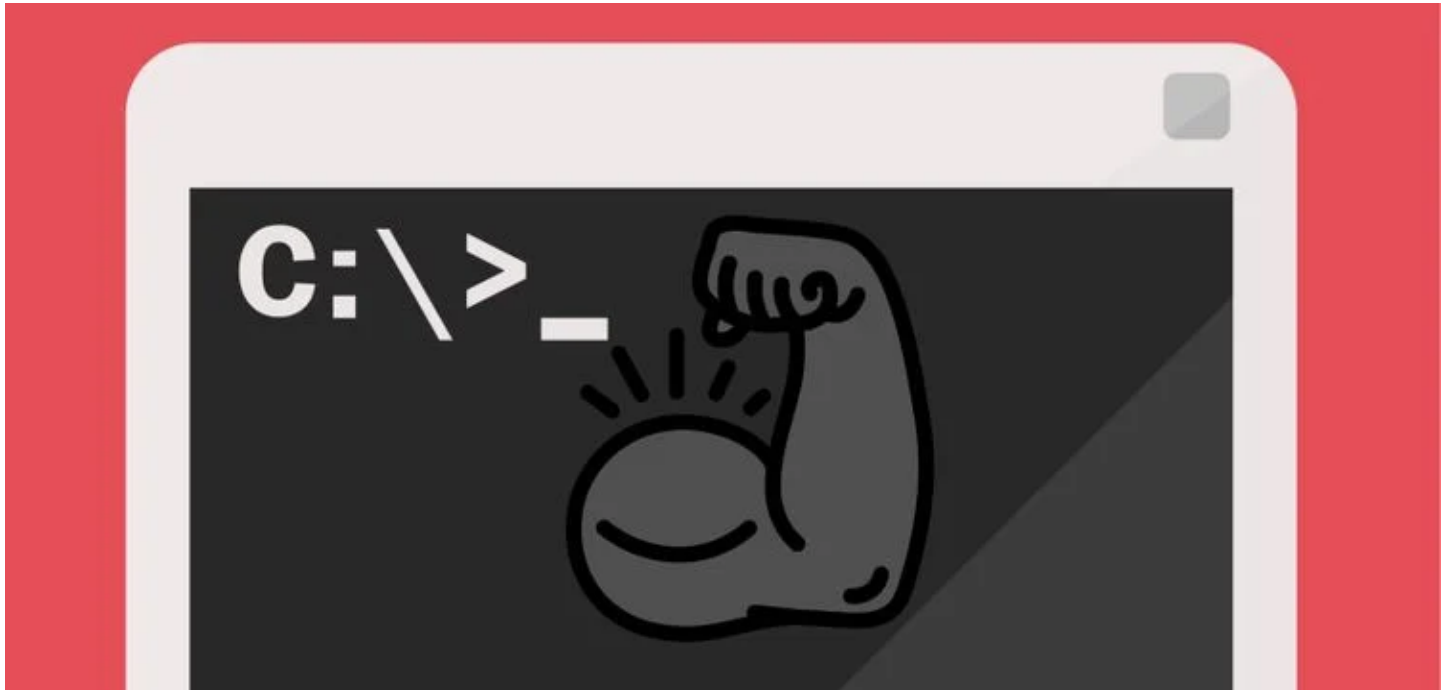
[HOME](#) > [WINDOWS](#)

Essential Windows CMD Commands You Should Know

The Command Prompt is your gateway to advanced Windows tools. Here are all the essential CMD commands in a cheat sheet.

BY JOE KEELEY

UPDATED JUN 18, 2021



The Windows Command Prompt may seem daunting, with its simple interface that lacks the usual Windows help tips, but it's actually one of the most powerful instruments in the Windows arsenal.

The Command Prompt on Windows 10 is useful for everything from complex automation to network configuration. What it lacks in interface it more than makes up for in effectiveness. If you don't know where to start with command prompt proficiency, what better place than to start here!

While most seek the best and most useful commands immediately, it helps to gloss over what different parameters mean. Proficiency with your Command Prompt comes not only through having a lexicon of commands, but of understanding what each parameter means and how different parameters can be combined to achieve a desired effect as well.

The following is a comprehensive list of the most essential Windows commands.

FREE DOWNLOAD: This cheat sheet is available as a **downloadable PDF** from our distribution partner, TradePub. You will have to complete a short form to access it for the first time only. Download the [**Essential Windows CMD Commands Cheat Sheet**](#).

Essential Windows Command Prompt Commands

COMMAND	RESULT
ASSOC	Displays or modifies file extension associations.
ATTRIB	Displays or changes file attributes.
BREAK	Sets or clears extended CTRL+C checking.
BCDBOOT	Used to copy critical files to the system partition and to create a new system BCD store.
BCDEDIT	Sets properties in boot database to control boot loading.
CACLS	Shows or changes access control lists (ACLs) of files.
CALL	Calls a batch program from another.
CD	Shows the name of or changes to a current directory.
CHCP	Displays or sets the active code page number.
CHDIR	Displays the name of or changes to the current directory.
CHKDSK	Checks a disk and displays a status report.
CHKNTFS	Displays or modifies the checking of disk at boot time.
CHOICE	Batch file command that allows users to select from a set of options.
CIPHER	Displays or alters the encryption of directories (files) on NTFS partitions.
CLIP	Redirects output off another command to the Windows clipboard.
CLS	Clears the screen.
CMD	Starts a new instance of the Windows command interpreter.
CMDKEY	Creates, lists, and deletes stored usernames and passwords or credentials.
COLOR	Sets the default console colors.
COMP	Compares the contents of two files or sets of files byte by byte
COMPACT	Displays or alters the compression of files on NTSF partitions.
CONVERT	Converts FAT volumes to NTFS. You cannot convert the current drive.
COPY	Copies one of more files to another location.
DATE	Displays or sets the date.
DEFRAG	Disk defragment accessory.
DEL	Deletes one or more files.
DIR	Displays a list of files and sub-directories in a directory.
DISKCOMP	Compares the contents of two floppy disks.
DISKCOPY	Copies the contents of one floppy disk to another.

COMMAND	RESULT
DISKPART	Displays or configures Disk Partition properties.
DOSKEY	Edits command lines, recalls Windows commands, and creates macros.
DRIVERQUERY	Displays current device driver status and properties.
ECHO	Displays messages, or turns commands echoing on or off.
ENDLOCAL	Ends localization of environment changes in a batch file.
ERASE	Deletes one or more files.
EXIT	Quits and closes the command shell.
EXPAND	Expands compressed files.
FC	Compares two files or sets of files and displays the differences between them.
FIND	Searches for a text string in a file or files.
FINDSTR	Searches for strings in files.
FOR	Runs a specified command for each item in a set.
FORFILES	Selects files in a folder for batch processing.
FORMAT	Formats a disc for use with Windows.
FSUTIL	Displays or configures the file system properties.
FTYPE	Displays or modifies file types used in file extensions associations.
GOTO	Directs the Windows command interpreter to a labeled line in a batch program.
GPRESULT	Displays Group Policy Information for machine or user.
GRAFTABL	Enables Windows to display an extended character set in graphics mode.
HELP	Provides help information for Windows commands.
ICACLS	Display, modify, backup, or restore ACLs for files and directories.
IF	Performs conditional processing in batch programs.
IPCONFIG	Displays all current TCP/IP network configuration values.
LABEL	Creates, changes, or deletes the volume label of a disk.
MD	Creates a directory.
MKDIR	Creates a directory.
MKLINK	Creates Symbolic Links and Hard Links.
MODE	Configures a system device.
MORE	Displays output one screen at a time.
MOVE	Moves one or more files from one directory to another directory.
OPENFILES	Queries, displays, or disconnects open files or files opened by network users.
PATH	Displays or sets a search path for executable files.
PAUSE	Suspends processing of a batch file.
POPD	Restores the previous value of the current directory saved by PUSH.D.
PRINT	Prints a text file.
PROMPT	Changes the Windows command prompt.
PUSHD	Saves the current directory then changes it.

COMMAND	RESULT
RD	Removes a directory.
RECOVER	Recovers readable information from a bad or defective disk.
REM	Designates comments (remarks) in batch files.
REN	Renames a file or files.
RENAME	Renames a file or files.
REPLACE	Replaces files.
RMDIR	Removes a directory.
ROBOCOPY	Advanced utility to copy files and directory trees.
SET	Displays, sets, or removes environment variables for current session.
SETLOCAL	Begins localization of environment changes in a batch file.
SETX	Sets environment variables.
SC	Displays or configures services (background processes).
SCHTASKS	Schedules commands and programs to run on a computer.
SHIFT	Shifts the position of replaceable parameters in batch files.
SHUTDOWN	Allows proper local or remote shutdown of machine.
SORT	Sorts input.
START	Starts a separate window to run a specified programs or command.
SUBST	Associates a path with a drive letter.
SYSTEMINFO	Displays machine specific properties and configuration.
TAKEOWN	Allows an administrator to take ownership of a file.
TASKLIST	Displays all currently running tasks including services.
TASKKILL	Kill running process or applications.
TIME	Displays or sets the system time.
TIMEOUT	Pauses the command processor for the specified number of seconds.
TITLE	Sets the window title for a CMD.EXE session.
TREE	Graphically displays the directory structure of a drive or path.
TYPE	Displays the contents of a text file.
VER	Displays the Windows version.
VERIFY	Tells Windows whether or verify that your files are written correctly to a disk.
VOL	Displays a disk volume label and serial number.
VSSADMIN	Volume Shadow Copy Service administration tool.
WHERE	Displays the locations of files that match a search pattern.
WMIC	Displays WMI information inside interactive command shell.
XCOPY	Copies files and directory trees.

Dive Deeper With the Windows Command Prompt