**How to Change Runlevels (targets) in SystemD**

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**Systemd** is a modern [init system for Linux](https://www.tecmint.com/best-linux-init-systems/): a system and service manager which is compatible with the popular SysV init system and LSB init scripts. It was intended to overcome the shortcomings of SysV init as explained in the following article.

1. [The Story Behind ‘init’ and ‘systemd’: Why ‘init’ Needed to be Replaced with ‘systemd’ in Linux](https://www.tecmint.com/systemd-replaces-init-in-linux/)

On Unix-like systems such as Linux, the current operating state of the operating system is known as a **runleve**l; it defines what system services are running. Under popular init systems like SysV init, runlevels are identified by numbers. However, in systemd runlevels are referred to as **targets**.

**Suggested Read:** [**Managing System Startup Process and Services (SysVinit, Systemd and Upstart)**](https://www.tecmint.com/linux-boot-process-and-manage-services/)

In this article, we will explain how to change runlevels (targets) with systemd. Before we move any further, let’s briefly under the relationship between **runlevels** numbers and **targets**.

* **Run level 0** is matched by **poweroff.target** (and **runlevel0.target** is a symbolic link to **poweroff.target**).
* **Run level 1** is matched by **rescue.target** (and **runlevel1.target**is a symbolic link to **rescue.target**).
* **Run level** 3 is emulated by **multi-user.target** (and **runlevel3.target** is a symbolic link to **multi-user.target**).
* **Run level 5** is emulated by **graphical.target** (and **runlevel5.target** is a symbolic link to **graphical.target**).
* **Run level 6** is emulated by **reboot.target** (and **runlevel6.target** is a symbolic link to **reboot.target**).
* **Emergency** is matched by **emergency.target**.

**How to View Current target (run level) in Systemd**

When the system boots, by default systemd activates the **default.target** unit. It’s main work is to activate services and other units by pulling them in via dependencies.

To view the default target, type the command below.

#systemctl get-default

graphical.target

To set the default target, run the command below.

# systemctl set-default multi-user.target

**How to Change the target (runlevel) in Systemd**

While the system is running, you can switch the target (run level), meaning only services as well as units defined under that target will now run on the system.

To switch to **runlevel 3**, run the following command.

# systemctl isolate multi-user.target

To change the system to **runlevel 5**, type the command below.

# systemctl isolate graphical.target

For more information about systemd, read through these useful articles:

1. [How to Manage ‘Systemd’ Services and Units Using ‘Systemctl’ in Linux](https://www.tecmint.com/manage-services-using-systemd-and-systemctl-in-linux/)
2. [How to Create and Run New Service Units in Systemd Using Shell Script](https://www.tecmint.com/create-new-service-units-in-systemd/)
3. [Managing System Startup Process and Services (SysVinit, Systemd and Upstart)](https://www.tecmint.com/linux-boot-process-and-manage-services/)
4. [Manage Log Messages Under Systemd Using Journalctl [Comprehensive Guide]](https://www.tecmint.com/manage-systemd-logs-using-journalctl/)

In this guide, we showed how to change runlevels (targets) with systemd. Use the comment form below to send us any questions or thoughts concerning this article.