

[About](#)[Articles](#)

# Use Homebrew zsh Instead of the OSX Default

*Keep your zsh up to date*

By [Rick Cogley](#)

16-May-2015

[Tips](#)[SysAdmin](#)[Upgrades](#)

TOC



## Initial Confirmations

### Upgrade zsh with brew

Confirm brew's zsh location

### Use the brew zsh

The *zsh* shell that Apple provides in OS Yosemite is out of date, as of the time of this article in May 2015. It's trivial to install the latest version, available on **homebrew**, and here's a couple of steps you need to do to make that your default. Read on for how to do it.

## Initial Confirmations

Confirm the current zsh version:

```
me@mysys ~ % zsh --version  
zsh 5.0.5 (x86_64-apple-darwin14.0)
```

Bash

Confirm the location of zsh:

```
me@mysys ~ % which zsh  
/bin/zsh
```

Bash

Confirm the shells OS X knows about:

```
me@mysys ~ % cat /etc/shells  
# List of acceptable shells for chpass(1).  
# Ftpd will not allow users to connect who are not using  
# one of these shells.
```

Bash

```
/bin/bash
/bin/csh
/bin/ksh
/bin/sh
/bin/tcsh
/bin/zsh
```

# Upgrade zsh with brew

Use `brew install zsh` to install.

Bash

```
rcogley@RickMBP ~ % brew install zsh
==> Installing zsh dependency: gdbm
==> Downloading https://homebrew.bintray.com/bottles/gdb
#####
==> Pouring gdbm-1.11.yosemite.bottle.2.tar.gz
🍺 /usr/local/Cellar/gdbm/1.11: 17 files, 532K
==> Installing zsh
==> Downloading https://homebrew.bintray.com/bottles/zsh
#####
==> Pouring zsh-5.0.7.yosemite.bottle.tar.gz
==> Caveats
Add the following to your zshrc to access the online help
  unalias run-help
  autoload run-help
  HELPDIR=/usr/local/share/zsh/help
==> Summary
🍺 /usr/local/Cellar/zsh/5.0.7: 1084 files, 11M
brew install zsh 3.27s user 2.47s system 43% cpu 13.17s
```

## Confirm brew's zsh location

Apple provides `/usr/local` for OS X users to install packages to and it's



already in your system path, so that's where brew installs. Confirm:

Bash

```
me@mysys ~ % ls -la /usr/local/bin/zs*  
lrwxr-xr-x  1 rcogley  wheel   27 May 16 10:54 /usr/local  
lrwxr-xr-x  1 rcogley  wheel   33 May 16 10:54 /usr/local
```

But you can also use brew commands to confirm the details about the package:

Bash

```
me@mysys ~ % brew list  
aspell      automake      enscript      gettext      gsl114  
autoconf     bazaar        gdbm           go            jenv  
me@mysys ~ % brew list zsh  
/usr/local/Cellar/zsh/5.0.7/bin/zsh  
/usr/local/Cellar/zsh/5.0.7/bin/zsh-5.0.7  
/usr/local/Cellar/zsh/5.0.7/lib/zsh/ (35 files)  
/usr/local/Cellar/zsh/5.0.7/share/info/ (7 files)  
/usr/local/Cellar/zsh/5.0.7/share/man/ (17 files)  
/usr/local/Cellar/zsh/5.0.7/share/zsh/ (1036 files)
```

And...

Bash

```
me@mysys ~ % brew info zsh  
zsh: stable 5.0.7 (bottled)  
http://www.zsh.org/  
/usr/local/Cellar/zsh/5.0.7 (1084 files, 11M) *  
  Poured from bottle  
From: https://github.com/Homebrew/homebrew/blob/master/L  
==> Dependencies  
Required: gdbm ✓, pcre ✓  
==> Options  
--disable-etcdir  
  Disable the reading of Zsh rc files in /etc  
==> Caveats  
Add the following to your zshrc to access the online hel  
unalias run-help  
autoload run-help
```

```
HELPPDIR=/usr/local/share/zsh/help
```

# Use the brew zsh

To use the zsh brew installed, you need to edit `/etc/shells`. It's owned by root, so use `sudo` to edit it. Here's one way:

```
me@mysys ~ % sudo nano /etc/shells
Password:
```

Bash

Add the path to the brew zsh at the end, save (ctrl-o, ctrl-x), then confirm:

```
me@mysys ~ % cat /etc/shells
# List of acceptable shells for chpass(1).
# Ftpd will not allow users to connect who are not using
# one of these shells.

/bin/bash
/bin/csh
/bin/ksh
/bin/sh
/bin/tcsh
/bin/zsh
/usr/local/bin/zsh
```

Bash

Now use `chsh` (change shell) to change to the brew zsh:

```
me@mysys ~ % chsh -s /usr/local/bin/zsh
Changing shell for rcogley.
Password for rcogley:
```

Bash

If you run `which` again, you'll see the system is recognizing the one you



installed:

```
me@mysys ~ % which zsh  
/usr/local/bin/zsh
```

Bash

And confirming the version shows:

```
me@mysys ~ % zsh --version  
zsh 5.0.7 (x86_64-apple-darwin14.0.0)
```

Bash

Et voilà!



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I'm **Rick Cogley**, and thanks for reading. I'm an experienced technologist, co-founder & -owner of **eSolia Inc.** I'm from America originally, but have been helping people and companies succeed in Japan since 1987. I'm an avid jogger, lover of music and puzzles, and family man with a wonderful wife and daughters. ***Please do me a favor** and share and link to this post, comment on it, and maybe connect with me on other social sharing sites as well.* Cheers!

Please share this post:



Tags: [brew](#), [homebrew](#), [mac](#), [osx](#), [upgrade](#), [zsh](#)

Next Newer: [Paper LIFE from Shitamachi Tokyo](#)

Next Older: [Old rsync on OS X?](#)

*This is RCC.* [Bio](#) [Colophon](#) [License](#)

Connect:



© 1966-2016 [Rick Cogley](#)

Get Email Updates:

Subscribe

