**Breaking Long Command Lines**

When constructing a long command string, it’s often useful to break it up onscreen to make it easier to understand or more visually pleasing. The backslash (\) character is used to turn the Enter key into a line feed, not a carriage return. The backslash is for causing [*special characters*](ch04.html#ch04key06a) to be taken literally.

The following example is confusing because it breaks when it wraps onscreen:

rpm –ql package1.1.1.rpm | xargs file | grep –i LSB | nl | pr | tac

You could break it like the following and still produce the same results:

rpm –ql package-1.1.1.i386.rpm \  
>| xargs file \

>| grep –i LSB \  
>| nl \  
>| pr \  
>| tac