Make an Alias in Bash or Zsh Shell in macOS with Terminal

🕐 MARCH 14, 2021 - 💬 7 COMMENTS

To make aliases of **macOS Unix** commands in your *bash* or *zsh* shell on macOS and earlier versions, it is done via your *.bash_profile* or *.zshrc* file which lives in your home account directory, if the file does not already exist, just create one.

As of macOS 10.6 Catalina and its successor Big Sur, Apple has made the zsh shell the default shell, previously it was the bash shell.

Launch **Terminal** from the **/Application/Utilities** folder

Go to your **home** directory by just entering '**cd**' followed by the 'return' key to enter the command:

```
cd
```

List your home directory contents including invisible files to see if the file already exists, use:

```
ls -la
```

```
drwxr-xr-x+ 18 ladmin staff 612 Jul 14 09:21 .
drwxr-xr-x 6 root admin 204 Jul 3 18:28 ..
-rw------- 1 ladmin staff 3 Jun 2 12:53 .CFUserTextEncoding
-rw-r--r--@ 1 ladmin staff 6148 Jul 14 09:01 .DS_Store
drwx------ 5 ladmin staff 170 Jul 3 18:44 .Trash
-rw------- 1 ladmin staff 1157 Jul 14 08:59 .bash_history
drwx------+ 5 ladmin staff 170 Jul 14 08:33 Desktop
drwx------+ 6 ladmin staff 204 Jun 2 13:48 Documents
drwx------+ 8 ladmin staff 272 Jul 3 18:10 Downloads
drwx------+ 29 ladmin staff 986 Jul 3 17:49 Library
drwx------+ 3 ladmin staff 102 Jun 2 12:53 Movies
drwx------+ 3 ladmin staff 102 Jun 2 12:53 Music
drwx------+ 4 ladmin staff 136 Jun 2 12:53 Pictures
drwxr-xr-x+ 4 ladmin staff 136 Jun 2 12:53 Public
drwxr-xr-x+ 6 ladmin staff 204 Jul 3 18:11 Sites
```

Create the *.bash_profile* or *.zshrc* file using the command line program called 'nano' if it doesn't exist, if it does exist you add your aliases to the end of the file. The commands below assume you are in your home directory:

```
nano .bash_profile
```
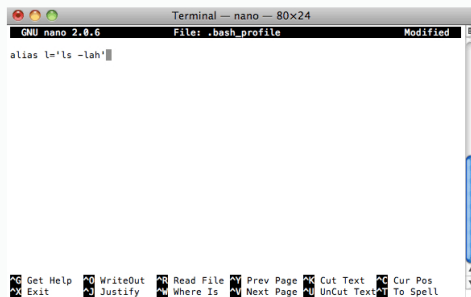
or...

```
nano .zshrc
```

If you are not in your home directory you would use a prefix of the tilde '~' and forward slash, which is the home directory path:

```
nano ~/.zshrc
```

or

```
nano ~/.bash_profile
```


When the *.bash_profile* or *.zshrc* file is created you are ready to enter your alias commands. So here I am using the alias 'l' to alias the command 'ls -lah'

```
alias l='ls -lah'
```

In **nano** 'control+o' to write the file out and 'control+x' to exit the file.
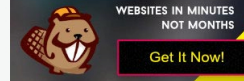
Refresh the shell environment by entering the command below:

```
source ~/.bash_profile
```

Tags

ACF apache archive beaver beaver builder beaver theme beaver themer bootstrap cache category cpt css customizer filter flexbox footer form genesis header homebrew htaccess iconfonts image javascript jquery loop markup menu meta mysql php repeater runcloud search filter pro serverpilot shortcode slider taxonomy template twentytwelve UI while widget woocommerce wp-cli

Donate

If you found something that helped you out and would like to make a donation, that's great
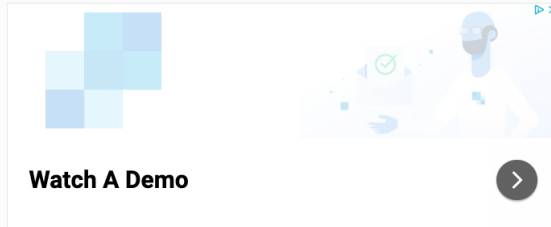
Donate

Or..

```
source ~/.zshrc
```

That's it, now the alias will take effect.

To add other aliases just start a new line, and apply the same formatting.
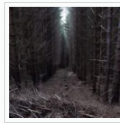
For symbolic links or desktop aliases see this reference.

Related Posts:

Difference between a Symbolic Link and a Finder Alias in...
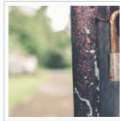
Install Apache, MySQL, PHP on macOS 11 Big Sur and earlier...

How to Add to the Shell Path in macOS Big Sur and Catalina...

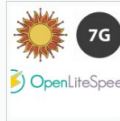Where is the bash shell in macos Monterey and Big Sur?

Generate SSH Private and Public Keys in macOS Big Sur

Making A Boot USB Disk of macOS 10.9 - 10.15 via Terminal...

Set Up Valet on macOS for Local WordPress Development

Use 7G WAF Firewall with OpenLiteSpeed on a RunCloud...

Categorized macOS, WordPress

Tagged alias, bash, zsh

7 Comments

Freddy on July 24, 2021 at 4:23 am

This was "perfect" to find tonight. Thanks for posting this! I'm new to Linux and this MacBook and liking it a lot so it's time to be more efficient and learning to use aliases is awesome!

All the best – Freddy

REPLY

lemmade on June 21, 2021 at 10:07 pm

Thank you for writing this post! I've spent a bit too much of this afternoon trying to make my aliases persist — this was the only effective solution that I was able to find.