

man – view manual pages for Unix commands

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man(1) man(1)
NAME
man - format and display the on-line manual pages

SYNOPSIS
man [-acdfFhkKtW] [--path] [-m system] [-p string] [-C config_file] [-M pathlist]
[-P pager] [-B browser] [-H htmlpager] [-S section_list] [section] name ...

DESCRIPTION
man formats and displays the on-line manual pages. If you specify section, man
only looks in that section of the manual. name is normally the name of the manual
page, which is typically the name of a command, function, or file. However, if
name contains a slash (/) then man interprets it as a file specification, so that
you can do man ./foo.5 or even man /cd/foo/bar.1.gz.

See below for a description of where man looks for the manual page files.

OPTIONS
-C config_file
    Specify the configuration file to use; the default is /private/etc/man.conf.
    (See man.conf(5).)

-M path
```

man command in unix

man command is one of the very first Unix commands everyone learns. It shows a brief manual for most of the commands available on your Unix-like OS and provides cross-references to other similar manuals.

What is man command used for

Many Unix commands are quite useful even if run without command line parameters, but as soon as you reach the next comfort level, you start wondering about extracting even more from the same command. This is when reading manuals becomes vital, and man offers a great way to explore them.

All Unix-like systems are provided with extensive manuals. Even if you don't have the material printed on paper, you still have plenty of information installed with your OS.

Most usually, manual pages are found under `/usr/share/man`

directory. Manuals are not presented in clear text – there's a markup language commands which should be interpreted by the **man** command.

What is a Unix manual page (manpage)

All the manuals for Unix commands are split into clearly marked sections:

- **NAME** – command name as it should be typed
- **SYNOPSIS** – syntax for running a command – all the possible command line options
- **DESCRIPTION** – textual description of what a command is used for
- **OPTIONS** – full list of command line options with thorough explanations
- **FILES** – files which are used by a command
- **SEE ALSO** – other relevant commands you might want to look at
- **BUGS** – known bugs and limitations of a command
- **AUTHOR** – list of command authors, developers and most current maintainers

A manual page generated by man command is nothing but a clear text you can access from most basic Unix shell session, formatted as per your terminal capabilities (most often you see that section names are shown in bold font, but that's about it).

Using man command in Unix

The simplest way to get help in Unix is to run man command and specify a name of another Unix command as a parameter. Naturally, the first thing you should do is to have man show you a manual for itself:

```
ubuntu$ man man
```

This is how it would look (click the image o get the full

resolution):

```
MAN(1)
Manual pager utils
MAN(1)

NAME
man - an interface to the on-line reference manuals

SYNOPSIS
man [-C file] [-d] [-D] [--warnings[=warnings]] [-R encoding] [-L locale] [-m system[,...]] [-M path] [-S list] [-e extension] [-i|-I] [--regex|--wildcard] [--names-only] [-a]
[-u] [--no-subpages] [-P pager] [-r prompt] [-7] [-E encoding] [--no-hyphenation] [--no-justification] [-p string] [-t] [-T[device]] [-H[browser]] [-X[dpi]] [-Z] [[section]
page ...] ...
man -k [apropos options] regexp ...
man -K [-w|-W] [-S list] [-i|-I] [--regex] [section] term ...
man -f [whatis options] page ...
man -l [-C file] [-d] [-D] [--warnings[=warnings]] [-R encoding] [-L locale] [-P pager] [-r prompt] [-7] [-E encoding] [-p string] [-t] [-T[device]] [-H[browser]] [-X[dpi]] [-Z]
file ...
man -w|-W [-C file] [-d] [-D] page ...
man -c [-C file] [-d] [-D] page ...
man [-?V]

DESCRIPTION
man is the system's manual pager. Each page argument given to man is normally the name of a program, utility or function. The manual page associated with each of these arguments is then found and displayed. A section, if provided, will direct man to look only in that section of the manual. The default action is to search in all of the available sections following a pre-defined order ("1 n l 8 3 2 3posix 3pm 3perl 5 4 9 6 7" by default, unless overridden by the SECTION directive in /etc/manpath.conf), and to show only the first page found, even if page exists in several sections.
```

man page for man

See also:

- [basic Unix commands](#)
- [unix commands](#)