

# tmux: basic configuration



I'm a [tmux](#) user for most of my console sessions these days – both at work and at home. Spending some time configuring and fine-tuning tmux will go a long way as you can make this already powerful tool into a truly indispensable one.

This is the first of a few posts around tmux configuration: I would like to gradually introduce useful settings rather than just share the tmux config file. All the changes are made in the `.tmux.conf` file in your home directory.

## Change tmux meta key

This is the very first thing I do on most tmux setups of mine: [remap the Ctrl+B meta key to something easier to use](#).

Since I've been mostly on the [MacOS](#) platform for the past 5 years, I really like doing two things on the UK keyboard I have:

- map the tilde button (top left, just unde the Escape key) to backtick (`)
- map backtick (`) as the new tmux meta-key

These two steps truly change that key to a modifier key, making it much easier to invoke tmux keyboard shortcuts.

Here are the configuration lines for this:

```
# change default key to back-tick
```

```
set -g prefix `
bind-key ` send-prefix
unbind C-b
```

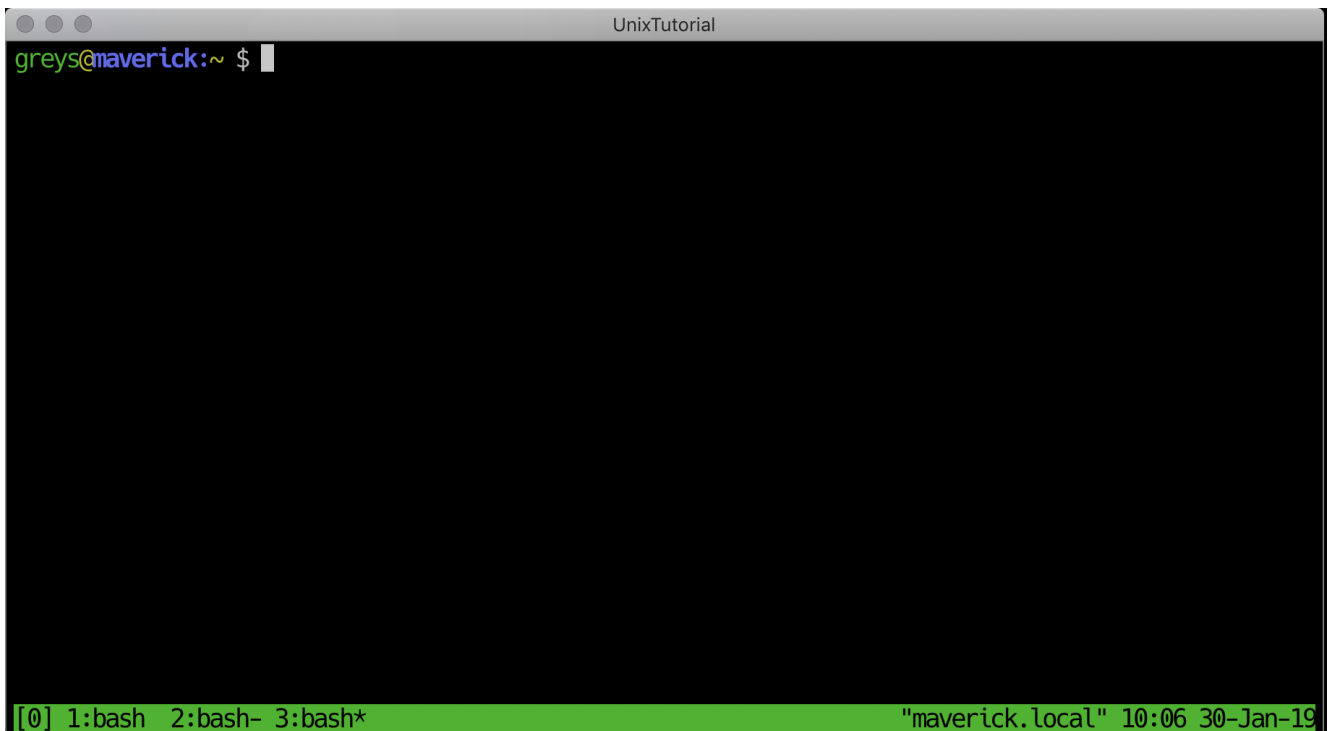
## Make tmux count windows from 1

Could be just me, but I really like my tmux windows to be numbered starting with 1 instead of the default 0. With the tmux meta key properly mapped, it just makes a lot more sense to use “meta key + 1” for selecting the first window, instead of using “meta key + 0” which is all the way across the top row of keys on the keyboard.

Here’s how I do this in `.tmux.conf` file:

```
# change pane numbers to start with 1 instead of 0
set -g base-index 1
set -g pane-base-index 1
```

End result should be this:



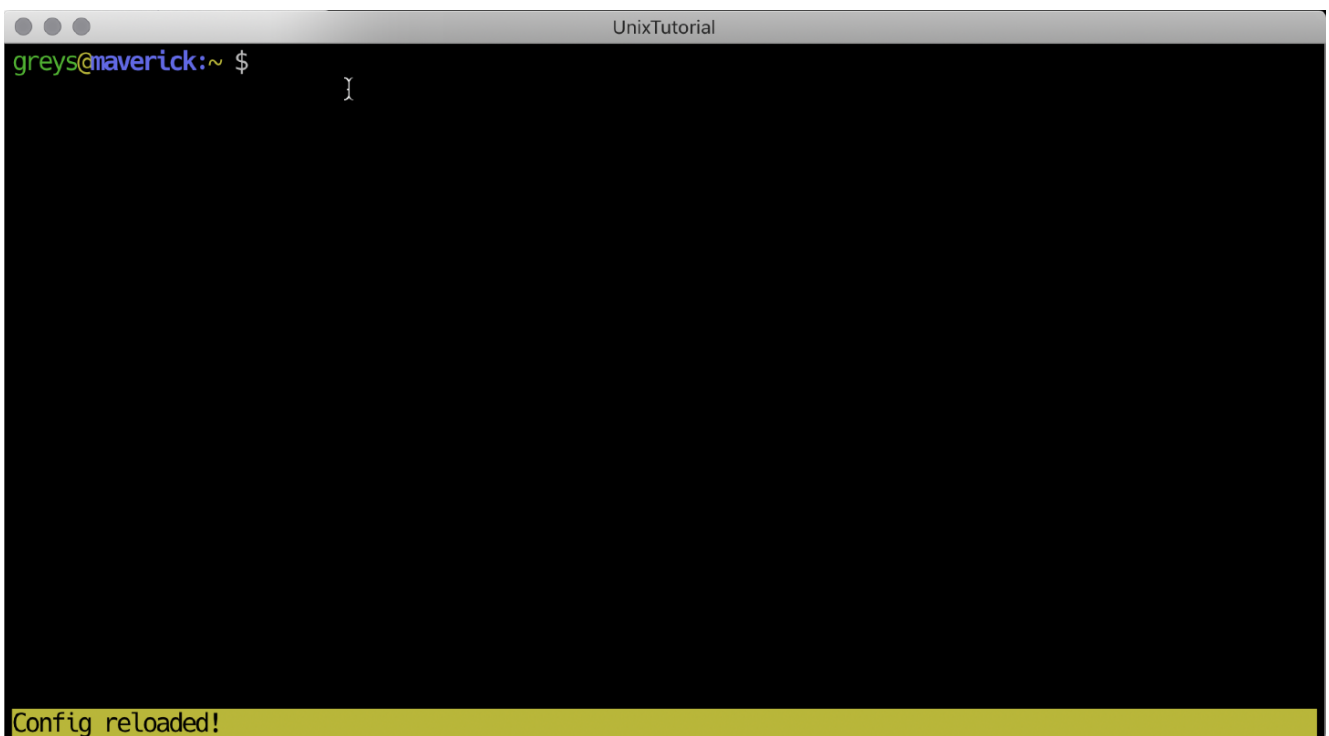
# Bind a key to re-load tmux config

This is the last of the initial changes I'm making to any tmux configuration: I map a certain key (meta-key + r) to reload the tmux configuration file. This saves me a restart of tmux every time I tweak some setting.

Here's the portion from my `.tmux.conf`:

```
# bind reload key
bind-key r source-file ~/.tmux.conf \; display-message "Config
reloaded!"
```

After you start tmux with these options in it, you can at any time press Meta-key + r and see that your `.tmux.conf` has just been reloaded and therefore activated:

A screenshot of a terminal window titled "UnixTutorial". The terminal shows a prompt "greys@maverick:~ \$" with a cursor. At the bottom of the terminal, a yellow bar contains the text "Config reloaded!".

## See Also

- [Getting started with tmux](#)
- [Change default tmux key](#)