

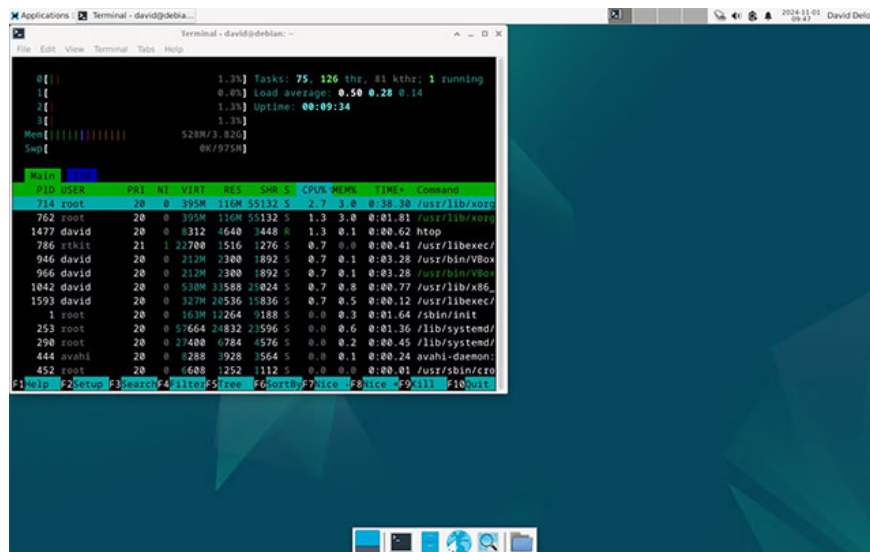
Habits to Keep Linux System Resource Usage Low

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Use a lightweight desktop environment

One way to keep Linux resource usage low is to choose a lightweight, simple desktop environment instead of 'flocking' to KDE or GNOME. These are desktop environments designed to run on newer, faster machines with more memory and hard drive space.



Xfce is the choice of many people looking for a lightweight Linux desktop environment. Other notable options include LXQt and Enlightenment. You can also consider just using a regular window manager like Openbox or Fluxbox. These managers are aimed at power users with a lot of command line experience.

Using the command line

```
David@debian:~$ ls /
bin  dev  home  initrd.img.old  lib64  media  opt  root  sbin  sys  usr  vmlinuz
boot  etc  initrd.img  lib  lost+found  mnt  proc  run  srv  tmp  var  vmlinuz.old
David@debian:~$ ls -l
total 948
drwxr-xr-x 2 david david 4096 Oct  7 11:08 Desktop
drwxr-xr-x 2 david david 4096 Oct  7 11:08 Documents
drwxr-xr-x 2 david david 4096 Oct  7 11:08 Downloads
-rw-r--r-- 1 david david  42 Oct 14 14:21 hello.py
-rw-r--r-- 1 david david 925977 Oct 24 15:32 index.html
drwxr-xr-x 2 david david 4096 Oct  7 11:08 Music
drwxr-xr-x 2 david david 4096 Oct  7 11:08 Pictures
drwxr-xr-x 2 david david 4096 Oct  7 11:08 Public
drwxr-xr-x 2 david david 4096 Oct  7 11:08 Templates
drwxr-xr-x 2 david david 4096 Oct  7 11:08 Videos
-rw-r--r-- 1 david david  20 Nov  1 09:31 words.txt
David@debian:~$
```

Using the command line is a good way to reduce the load on your system. Command line programs, even interactive ones, typically run in a terminal and use fewer resources than graphical programs that contain images, video, or sound.

Resource savings are one reason why many seasoned Linux users always use the command line as much as possible for every task.

It is even possible to use the command line to completely forgo the desktop. Many servers do this to run 'desktop-less' without a monitor or keyboard. You can disable the display manager and launch X or Wayland from the command line if you want, but this is a bit of an 'extreme' option.

Use lightweight programs

As well as a lightweight desktop environment, you should also run lightweight programs on your system. You might use AbiWord for word processing and Gnumeric for spreadsheets instead of LibreOffice. Or you might use Viper instead of Chrome or Firefox for web browsing.

Turn off unused services

Linux systems run a lot of daemons, or background processes, to perform various management tasks. Most of them are necessary, but some of them slow down your system. You can disable some of them, for example with the `systemctl` command on distributions that use `systemd`.

If you are testing a web server for an application you are developing, you probably don't need to run it all the time, instead turn it on and off as needed.

It's best to leave any processes installed on your system as they are, especially if you don't know what they do. At the very least, read the manual so you don't disable something important. Reading the documentation about running processes is also a way to learn about Linux.

Monitor progress

You can manage Linux resource usage by monitoring the processes on your machine. You can use the `top` or `htop` command to see the processes in real time, and you can also sort by memory or CPU usage to see which processes are taking up the most resources.

With this information, you can try using a different program or disabling the services as mentioned above.

Consider using a minimalist distribution



If you want a really lightweight Linux system, some good Ubuntu-based distros include Xubuntu and Lubuntu. You get the advantage of a lighter environment right from the start. Try installing them on older computers you may have. You can breathe new life into them, and even prevent 'e-waste'.

Install only the programs you need

One simple way to save resources on a Linux system is to install only what you need. This can be easier said than done, as some programs will install multiple dependencies. This is still a testament to the Unix philosophy, with programs built from smaller components.

If you only use your Linux system to send email or browse the web, you probably don't need to install programming tools like a C compiler. If you only do word processing, you don't need to install a video player. Those are just simple examples.

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