

# How to back up and restore Linux Terminal history

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Linux Terminal comes with a handy feature called '**History**'. For example, every command entered in the terminal will be saved in a file called **.bash\_history**. A history file is created for each user and can be found in the user's home directory, for example **'/home/username/.bash\_history'**.

Note that the history file, **.bash\_history**, is not protected with special rights. Therefore, any user who has an account on the Linux system can view the history file of other users.

## Backup and restore terminal history

1. Display history file content
2. Backup history file
3. Back up commands in specific history
4. Restore history backup file for current user
5. Restore history backup file to other users

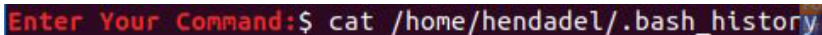
In the first part, I will show you how to back up a Linux Terminal history file. **Quantrimang.com** will then show you how to restore those backups.

## Display history file content

**Step 1** : To list the contents of the history file, you can use one of the following methods.

The first method is to use the **cat** command as follows:

```
cat /home/hendadel/.bash_history
```



```
Enter Your Command:$ cat /home/hendadel/.bash_history
```

The second method, you can preview the contents of the history file with the **history** command as follows:

```
history
```

```
Enter Your Command:$ history
```

**Step 2:** You can search the history by using the **grep** command with one of the following methods.

The first method is to use **kill** in the **.bash\_history** file as follows:

```
cat /home/hendadel/.bash_history | grep 'kill'
```

As you can see in the screenshot below, the command will list all commands containing the keyword **'kill'**.

```
Enter Your Command:$ cat /home/hendadel/.bash_history | grep 'kill'
sudo killall apt
sudo killall apt-get
sudo kill -9 735
sudo apt install xorg-xkill
xkill
sudo apt install xkill
xkill
Enter Your Command:$
```

The second method to search history is by using the **grep** command with the **history** command as follows:

```
history | grep 'kill'
```

```
Enter Your Command:$ history | grep 'kill'
19 sudo killall apt
20 sudo killall apt-get
23 sudo kill -9 735
38 sudo apt install xorg-xkill
39 xkill
40 sudo apt install xkill
41 xkill
47 cat /home/hendadel/.bash_history | grep 'kill'
48 history | grep 'kill'
Enter Your Command:$
```

## Backup history file

**Step 1 :** Now to create a backup from the Linux Terminal history file, you can use one of the following methods.

The first method is to use the **cat** command with the **'>'** symbol . This step will redirect the output to the backup file.

```
cat /home/hendadel/.bash_history > history_backup
```

As you can see in the next screenshot, a backup file will be created.

```
Enter Your Command:$ cat /home/hendadel/.bash_history > history_backup
Enter Your Command:$ ls
Desktop Downloads Music Public Templates
Documents history_backup Pictures snap Videos
Enter Your Command:$
```

The second method is to use the **history** command with the '>' symbol .

```
history > history_backup2
```

```
Enter Your Command:$ history > history_backup2
Enter Your Command:$ ls
Desktop Downloads history_backup2 Pictures snap Videos
Documents history_backup Music Public Templates
Enter Your Command:$
```

**Step 2 :** To make a backup of the history file that belongs to another user, you can use the following command.

```
cat /home/admin/.bash_history > admin_history_backup
```

```
Enter Your Command:$ cat /home/admin/.bash_history > admin_history_backup
```

## Back up commands in specific history

**Step 1 :** To back up specific commands from the history file, you can use one of the following methods.

The first method is to use the **grep** command , along with the symbol '>' or '>>'. The differences between the previous icons are:

1. > : Whenever this icon is used, it will overwrite the contents of the file after each.
2. >> : However, this icon appends the output to the created file without overwriting the file.

```
cat /home/hendadel/.bash_history | grep 'kill' >> history_backup
```

```
Enter Your Command:$ cat /home/hendadel/.bash_history | grep 'kill' >> his
tory_backup
Enter Your Command:$
```

The second method is to use the **history** and **grep** commands , along with the '>>' symbol as follows:

```
history | grep 'kill' >> history_backup2
```

```
Enter Your Command:$ history | grep 'kill' >> history_backup2
Enter Your Command:$
```

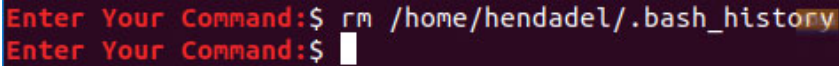
**Step 2 :** In case you need to back up specific commands from other user history, you can use the following command.

```
cat /home/admin/.bash_history | grep 'sudo' >> admin_history_backup
```

## Restore history backup file for current user

**Step 1 :** To restore the historical backup file, all you need to do is delete the original **.bash\_history** history file , located in the Home folder as follows:

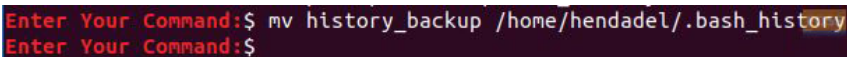
```
rm /home/hendadel/.bash_history
```



```
Enter Your Command:$ rm /home/hendadel/.bash_history
Enter Your Command:$
```

**Step 2 :** Now use the **mv** command to move the historical backup file to the Home folder.

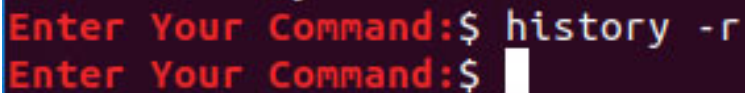
```
mv history_backup /home/hendadel/.bash_history
```



```
Enter Your Command:$ mv history_backup /home/hendadel/.bash_history
Enter Your Command:$
```

**Step 3 :** After moving the historical backup file, you must reload the history using the following command.

```
history -r
```



```
Enter Your Command:$ history -r
Enter Your Command:$
```

You can now preview your history with one of the commands listed earlier.

## Restore history backup file to other users

**Step 1 :** In case you need to restore a historical backup file to another user, you must transfer the account to that user with the following command.

```
su admin
```

**Step 2 :** After successful login, delete the current history file.

```
rm /home/admin/.bash_history
```

**Step 3 :** Now, move the historical backup file to the new location.

```
mv /home/hendadel/admin_history_backup /home/admin/.bash_history
```

**Step 4 :** Reload history with the following command.

```
history -r
```

All operations are completed.

Hope you are succesful.

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