

GNU Screen Cheatsheet

A quick reference guide to using GNU Screen, a terminal multiplexer. Learn how to manage multiple terminal sessions within a single window, detach and reattach sessions, and customize your screen environment.



Session Management

Starting a Screen Session

screen - Starts a new screen session.	
Example:	
screen	
screen -S session_name - Starts a named screen	
session.	
Example:	
screen -S my_session	
screen -d -m command - Starts a detached screen	
session, running command.	
Example:	
screen -d -m ./my_script.sh	

Detaching and Reattaching

Ctrl+a d	Detach the current screen session. The session continues to run in the background.
screen -	Reattach to a detached screen session. If multiple sessions are running, it attaches to the first available.
screen -r session_na me	Reattach to a specific named screen session. Example: screen -r my_session
screen - ls or screen - list	List all active screen sessions. Provides session IDs or names for reattaching.

Ending a Screen Session

exit or Ctrl+d - Exit the current shell in the screen window. If this is the last window in the session, the session will terminate.

Ctrl+a k - Kill the current window within the screen session. Confirm the kill to terminate the window.

Window Management

Creating New Windows

Ctrl+a c - Create a new window within the current		
screen session. This opens a new shell prompt.		
Ctrl+a :screen command - Create a new window and		
execute command in it. The window automatically closes		
after the command completes.		
Example:		
Ctrl+a :screen top		

Switching Between Windows

Ctrl+a n or Ctrl+a Ctrl+n	Switch to the next window in the session.
Ctrl+a p or Ctrl+a Ctrl+p	Switch to the previous window in the session.
Ctrl+a number	Switch to a specific window by its number (0-9).
Ctrl+a '	Prompts for a window number or title to switch to.
Ctrl+a Ctrl+a	Toggles between the current and previous window.

Window Information

Ctrl+a w - Display a list of all windows in the current session, indicating the current window with an asterisk.

Ctrl+a A - Rename the current window. This is useful for quickly identifying different tasks running in each window.

Ctrl+a t - Display the current time and system load average in the current window.

Advanced Features

Screen Splitting

Ctrl+	Split the current window horizontally into two regions.
Ctrl+	Split the current window vertically into two regions.
Ctrl+	Switch the input focus to the next region. (Note: May be Ctrl+a Ctrl+i on some systems).
Ctrl+	Remove all regions except the current one.
Ctrl+	Kill the current region. Requires confirmation.

Copy and Paste

Ctrl+a Esc - Enter copy mode. Use arrow keys to move the cursor.
Press Space to begin selection, move the cursor to the end of the text you want to copy, and press Space again to complete the selection.
Press Ctrl+a] - Paste the copied text into the current window.

Scrolling

Ctrl	Enter scrollback mode. Use arrow keys, Page Up,	
+a [Page Down, Home, and End to navigate the	
	scrollback buffer.	
Esc	Exit scrollback mode.	

Configuration

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Configuration File

Screen's configuration is managed through the _-/.screenrc file. This file allows you to customize keybindings, startup behavior, and other settings.

Example:

Set a default window name startup_message off

dedicated_cpu on

#bindkey ^k kill

Hardstatus setup hardstatus alwayslastline

hardstatus string '%{wk} %?%-w%?%{r}(%{W}\$%n*%t%?)%{k}%+w %=%{g} CPU:%l %

{b} %H

Common Configuration Options

startup_message	Disable the startup message.
vbell off	Disable visual bell (flashing screen).
bindkey key	Bind a key combination to a screen command. For example: bindkey ^k kill #bind Ctrl+a k to kill the window
defscrollback size	Sets the default scrollback buffer size for new windows. Example: defscrollback 10000
caption always	Always show caption line at the bottom of the screen.

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