

How to Change Crontab Using a Bash Script?

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Crontab, which stands for cron table, is used to run one or more scripts in Linux based on a specific time. Usually, if you want to change something in the crontab, you use the **crontab -e** command and then change the crontab. But I want to change crontab using a shell script.

Problem

How to change crontab using a bash script?

Solution

I create a bash script to execute something on my Linux server, and in my script, I want to change the crontab so the script will add, change, or remove the script in the crontab. Here are ways to change crontab using a script:

1. Add a script in crontab

For example, if you want to add a **random.sh** script which is in the **/root/scripts** folder in crontab and will run every 5 minutes, then use the command below:

```
(crontab -l 2>/dev/null || true; echo "*/5 * * * *  
/root/scripts/random.sh") | crontab -
```

```
root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l  
root@ubuntu2404:~#  
root@ubuntu2404:~# (crontab -l 2>/dev/null || true; echo "*/5 * * * *  
/root/scripts/random.sh") | crontab -  
root@ubuntu2404:~#  
root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l  
*/5 * * * * /root/scripts/random.sh  
root@ubuntu2404:~#
```

Add a script to the crontab

Or if you want to add the script to the crontab in another form of writing, then you can use the command below:

```
(crontab -l 2>/dev/null || true; echo "*/5 * * * *          cd  
/root/scripts;./random.sh") | crontab -
```

```
root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l  
root@ubuntu2404:~#  
root@ubuntu2404:~# (crontab -l 2>/dev/null || true; echo "*/5 * * * *          cd /root/scripts;./random.sh") | crontab -  
root@ubuntu2404:~#  
root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l  
*/5 * * * *          cd /root/scripts;./random.sh  
root@ubuntu2404:~#
```

Another method to add the script to the crontab

2. Change the script in crontab

If you want to change the file in crontab to once every 10 minutes (previously every 5 minutes) for the random.sh script in the /root/scripts folder, then use the command below:

```
crontab -l | sed 's/\*/5 \* \* \* \*  
\root\scripts\random.sh\*/10 \* \* \* \*  
\root\scripts\random.sh/g' | crontab -
```

```
root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l  
*/5 * * * *          /root/scripts/random.sh  
root@ubuntu2404:~#  
root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l | sed 's/\*/5 \* \* \* \*          \root\scripts\random.sh\*/10 \* \* \* \*          \root\scripts\random.sh/g' | crontab -  
root@ubuntu2404:~#  
root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l  
*/10 * * * *          /root/scripts/random.sh  
root@ubuntu2404:~#
```

change crontab using a script

Or, you can execute the command below if your script uses another form of writing in crontab:

```
crontab -l | sed 's/\*/5 \* \* \* \*          cd\  
\root\scripts;\.\/random.sh\*/10 \* \* \* \*          cd\  
\root\scripts;\.\/random.sh/g' | crontab -
```

```
root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l  
*/5 * * * *          cd /root/scripts;./random.sh  
root@ubuntu2404:~#  
root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l | sed 's/\*/5 \* \* \* \*          cd \root\scripts;\.\/random.sh\*/10 \* \* \* \*          cd \root\scripts;\.\/random.sh/g' | crontab -  
root@ubuntu2404:~#  
root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l  
*/10 * * * *          cd /root/scripts;./random.sh  
root@ubuntu2404:~#
```

Change the script using another form of writing in Crontab using a script

3. Disable and enable the script

If you want to disable the random.sh script in crontab, then use the command below:

```
crontab -l | sed 's/\*/10 \* \* \* \*          cd\  
\root\scripts;\.\/random.sh\*/10 \* \* \* \*          cd\  
\root\scripts;\.\/random.sh/g' | crontab -
```

```

\root\scripts\;\.\random.sh\#\*\10 \* \* \* \*
\root\scripts\;\.\random.sh/g' | crontab -

```

```

root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l
*/10 * * * * cd /root/scripts;./random.sh
root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l | sed 's/\#\*\10 \* \* \* \* cd\ \root\scripts\;\.\random.sh\#\*\10 \* \* \* \* cd\ \root\scripts\;\.\random.sh/g' | crontab -
root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l
*/10 * * * * cd /root/scripts;./random.sh
root@ubuntu2404:~#

```

Disable the script in the crontab

But if you want to enable it, use the command below:

```

crontab -l | sed 's/\#\*\10 \* \* \* \* cd\
\root\scripts\;\.\random.sh\#\*\10 \* \* \* \* cd\
\root\scripts\;\.\random.sh/g' | crontab -

```

```

root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l
*/10 * * * * cd /root/scripts;./random.sh
root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l | sed 's/\#\*\10 \* \* \* \* cd\ \root\scripts\;\.\random.sh\#\*\10 \* \* \* \* cd\ \root\scripts\;\.\random.sh/g' | crontab -
root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l
*/10 * * * * cd /root/scripts;./random.sh
root@ubuntu2404:~#

```

Enable the script in the crontab

4. Deleting the script in crontab

Use the command below if you want to delete the random.sh file in crontab:

```

crontab -l | sed '/\*\5 \* \* \* \* \root\scripts\random.sh/d' |
crontab -

```

```

root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l
*/5 * * * * /root/scripts/random.sh
root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l | sed '/\*\5 \* \* \* \* \root\scripts\random.sh/d' | crontab -
root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l
root@ubuntu2404:~#

```

Delete the script in the crontab

Or, you can execute the command below if your script uses another form of writing in crontab:

```

crontab -l | sed '/\*\5 \* \* \* \* cd\
\root\scripts\;\.\random.sh/d' | crontab -

```

```

root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l
*/5 * * * * cd /root/scripts;./random.sh
root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l | sed '/\*\5 \* \* \* \* cd\ \root\scripts\;\.\random.sh/d' | crontab -
root@ubuntu2404:~# crontab -l
root@ubuntu2404:~#

```

Delete the script in crontab using another form

Note

You have to pay attention to whether the script in the crontab uses spaces or tabs because it greatly affects whether the script that you run can change something in the crontab or not. You have to put a backslash(\) if you want to change or delete your script in crontab that uses symbols like an asterisk(*), forward slash(/), hash(#), space, and so on.

References

techtarget.com
stackoverflow.com
webopedia.com