hyperfine Command-line benchmarking

START HERE

`hyperfine '<cmd>'`
Benchmark one command

`hyperfine -p '<prep>' '<cmd>'`
Prepare before each run

`hyperfine '<a>' '<b>'`
Compare commands

`hyperfine -L <var> a,b '<cmd> {var}'`
Try several values

`hyperfine -w 3 '<cmd>'`
Warm the cache first

`hyperfine -S '<cmd> | wc -l'`
Use shell syntax

`hyperfine -r 20 '<cmd>'`
Fixed number of runs

`hyperfine --export-markdown <file> ...`
Save a results table

setup once → **prepare** before each run → **command** timed → **conclude** after each run → finally **cleanup** once

One benchmark, per command

CONCEPTS

Commands run directly without a shell. Quote each command, and add -S when you need pipes, && or redirects.

The first command is the reference; the others are reported relative to it. Default is at least 10 runs, aiming for about 3 seconds.

Very fast commands (a few ms) are noisy: prefer no shell, and compare many runs.

RUNNING

`hyperfine '<cmd>'`
Benchmark a command

`hyperfine '<cmd1>' '<cmd2>'`
Compare commands side by side

`hyperfine -r <n> '<cmd>'`
Run exactly n times

`hyperfine -m <n> '<cmd>'`
Run at least n times
Default minimum is 10.

`hyperfine -M <n> '<cmd>'`
Run at most n times

`hyperfine -w <n> '<cmd>'`
Do n warmup runs first
Warmup runs are not measured.

`hyperfine -n <name> '<cmd>'`
Give a command a display name
Repeat -n once per command.

`hyperfine -i '<cmd>'`
Ignore a non-zero exit code
Hyperfine aborts on failure by default.

`hyperfine -i=1,2 '<cmd>'`
Ignore only listed exit codes
The value needs an equals sign.

`hyperfine --show-output '<cmd>'`
Show the command's output

RUNNING (cont.)

`hyperfine --output <where> '<cmd>'`
Send output to null, pipe, inherit or file

`hyperfine --input <file> '<cmd>'`
Feed a file to stdin

PREPARING RUNS

`-p '<cmd>' / --prepare`
Run before every timing run
Use for cold-cache or reset steps. Pass once for all or once per command.

`-C '<cmd>' / --conclude`
Run after every timing run

`-s '<cmd>' / --setup`
Run once before a benchmark

`-c '<cmd>' / --cleanup`
Run once after a benchmark

`--prepare 'make clean' 'make'`
Rebuild from scratch each run

`--prepare 'sync; echo 3 | sudo tee /proc/sys/vm/drop_caches'`
Drop the Linux page cache
Run sudo -v first so no password prompt interrupts.

`--env '<K=V ...>'`
Set environment variables
No shell expansion; values may contain {var} placeholders.

Setup, prepare, conclude and cleanup always run through a shell, even without -S.

PARAMETERS

`-P <var> <min> <max> '<cmd> {var}'`
Scan a numeric range

`-P <var> <min> <max> -D <step> ...`
Set the scan step size

PARAMETERS (cont.)

`-L <var> a,b,c '<cmd> {var}'`
Try a list of values

`-L <v1> a,b -L <v2> x,y '<cmd> {v1} {v2}'`
Benchmark all combinations

`-P threads 1 8 --env 'OMP_NUM_THREADS={threads}' ...`
Use a parameter in the environment

`HYPERFINE_ITERATION`
Zero-based run counter in the command
Handy for per-run output files; needs -S for ${...} expansion.

SHELL

`-N / --shell=none`
Run without a shell (default)

`-S`
Run through the default shell
sh on Unix, cmd.exe on Windows.

`--shell <name>`
Use a specific shell, e.g. bash or zsh

`--shell=bash <function>`
Benchmark an exported bash function
Export it first with export -f.

With a shell, hyperfine measures an empty shell's startup and subtracts it. Skip the shell for commands under about 5 ms.

OUTPUT AND EXPORT

`--export-json <file>`
Save stats and every sample as JSON

`--export-markdown <file>`
Save a Markdown table

`--export-csv <file>`
Save one CSV row per command

OUTPUT AND EXPORT (cont.)

`--export-asciidoc <file>`
Save an AsciiDoc table

`--export-orgmode <file>`
Save an org-mode table

`--style <type>`
auto, basic, full, nocolor, color or none
Use basic or none in scripts and CI logs.

`--metrics <list>`
Choose metrics, e.g. time_wall_clock:ms
Presets: default, time, all. Hardware counters need no shell.

`--metrics memory_peak_resident:MiB`
Report peak memory in MiB

`-h / --help`
Show help

`-V / --version`
Show version

RECIPES

Cold versus warm cache

```
# warm: ignore the first slow runs
hyperfine -S --warmup 3 'grep -R TODO .'
# cold: drop the cache before every run
sudo -v
hyperfine -S --prepare 'sync; echo 3 | sudo tee /proc/sys/vm/drop_caches' 'grep -R TODO .'
```

Compare two tools and keep a report

```
hyperfine -w 3 -n grep -n rg 'grep -r TODO .' 'rg TODO' \
  --export-markdown bench.md --export-json bench.json
```

Compare git branches

```
hyperfine -L branch main,faster \
  --setup 'git switch {branch}' \
  'python main.py'
```

Thread scaling build

```
hyperfine --prepare 'make clean' \
  -P jobs 1 8 'make -j {jobs}'
```