watch Rerun a command

Run command sh -c or exec → `capture output` → **Draw screen** header + first page → `sleep -n secs` → **Repeat** until Ctrl+C or exit flag

CONCEPTS

watch runs the command through sh -c, then redraws the screen; pipes and variables in unquoted form are handled by your shell first.

Options must come before the command: everything after the command is passed to it, not to watch.

BASICS

watch *<cmd>*
Run a command every 2 seconds

watch -n *<secs> <cmd>*
Set the update interval

watch -n 0.5 *<cmd>*
Sub-second interval (minimum 0.1)

watch -d *<cmd>*
Highlight what changed since last run

watch -d=permanent *<cmd>*
Keep highlighting all changes since start

watch -t *<cmd>*
Turn off the header line

watch -c *<cmd>*
Interpret ANSI colours

BASICS (cont.)

watch -w *<cmd>*
Truncate long lines instead of wrapping

watch -b *<cmd>*
Beep when the command fails

watch -r *<cmd>*
Do not rerun on terminal resize

WATCH_INTERVAL=*<secs>*
Set a default interval via environment

Ctrl+C
Quit watch

EXIT CONDITIONS

watch -g *<cmd>*
Exit when the visible output changes

watch -q *<cycles> <cmd>*
Exit when output is unchanged for N cycles

watch -e *<cmd>*
Freeze and exit on command error

watch -g *<cmd>*; *<next>*
Chain an action after the change

echo $?
Exit status of watch after -g, -e

QUOTING AND SHELL

watch '*<cmd1>* **|** *<cmd2>***'**
Quote pipelines so watch runs them

watch -x *<cmd> <args>*
Exec directly, no sh -c

watch -x sh -c '*<script>***'**
Exec a shell you choose

watch 'echo $$'
Single quotes: expanded on each run

watch echo $$
Unquoted: expanded once by your shell

watch "*<cmd>* **$VAR"**
Double quotes expand the variable first

watch 'date +%s.%N'
See the time drift between runs

TIMING

watch -p -n *<secs> <cmd>*
Run at precise intervals

watch -n 10 sleep 1
Without -p the gap adds the command's run time

watch -n 60 *<cmd>*
Slow poll for mail or a status page

TIMING (cont.)

watch -n 0.1 *<cmd>*
Fastest allowed refresh

EVERYDAY TARGETS

watch df -h
Disk space

watch -d free -m
Memory use

watch 'ss -tulpn'
Listening ports

watch -d ls -l *<dir>*
Directory changes

watch 'ps aux --sort=-%cpu | head'
Top CPU processes

watch -n 1 'cat /proc/loadavg'
Load average

watch kubectl get pods
Pod status

watch -n 1 'docker ps'
Running containers

watch 'wc -l *<file>***'**
Line count of a growing file

watch 'sensors'
Temperatures

watch -d 'ip -s link show *<iface>***'**
Interface counters

EVERYDAY TARGETS (cont.)

watch 'systemctl status *<unit>***'**
Service state

watch -d cat /proc/interrupts
Interrupt counters

watch 'nvidia-smi'
GPU use

watch 'curl -sI *<url>* **| head -1'**
Poll an HTTP status

watch 'du -sh *<dir>***'**
Directory size

RECIPES

Wait for a pod rollout

```
watch -g -n 2 'kubectl get pod <name> -o jsonpath={.status.phase}'
echo done
```

Highlight a changing counter

```
watch -d -n 1 'grep MemFree /proc/meminfo'
```

Notify when a site returns 200

```
watch -g -n 30 'curl -s -o /dev/null -w %{http_code} <url>' ; notify-send up
```

Coloured output in watch

```
watch -c -n 2 'ls --color=always -l'
```