watch Rerun a command

CONCEPTS

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

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

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

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

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

Ctrl+C
Quit watch

EXIT CONDITIONS

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

EXIT CONDITIONS (cont.)

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

QUOTING AND SHELL

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

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

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

watch echo $$
Unquoted: expanded once by your shell

TIMING

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

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