

# Edit previous commands in shell before running them

Let's say you run a certain command with some parameters (like opening a file in `vim`). Then you want to run basically the same command, but instead of opening the file in `vim`, you just want to view the contents with `cat`.

The most common way of doing this would be either:

- Writing the whole command again like this (very slow)  
`sudo cat /etc/apt/sources.list.d/nginx.list`
- Clicking the arrow up button on your keyboard to bring up the previous command (`sudo vim /etc/apt/sources.list.d/nginx.list`) and then changing `vim` to `cat` by moving the cursor using arrow key on the line or some other shortcut
  - This is the way I usually used to do it, but found it oftentimes pretty tedious - especially jumping to the word, deleting it and writing a new one

Recently I found out you can do it a different way and it's actually better for my workflow once I got used to it.

- Run the command you want to run first  
`sudo vim /etc/apt/sources.list.d/nginx.list`
- Then if you want to do the same thing, but just with `cat`, write this in the shell and then hit enter  
`!!:gs/vim/cat`

As you can see below, this will run the previous command, but replacing the word `vim` with `cat`

```
user~$ sudo vim /etc/apt/sources.list.d/nginx.list
user~$ !!:gs/vim/cat
sudo cat /etc/apt/sources.list.d/nginx.list
deb [signed-by=/usr/share/keyrings/nginx-archive-keyring.gpg] http://nginx.org/packages/mainline/debian
bookworm nginx
```

- `!!` - Bring up the previous command
- `:gs` - Global search and replace - <https://unix.stackexchange.com/questions/116623/xy-unix-trick-for-all-instances-in-last-command/116626#116626>
- `/vim/cat` - Replace the word `vim` with `cat`

This can be useful e.g when you edit a file and then want to print out the edited contents into the shell to copy to a ticket or documentation.

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