



ZORIN OS 18 CORE · WINDOWS-LIKE DESKTOP · APT

Zorin OS Handbook

For beginners

Don't fear the terminal. Start with a few commands. This section is for people who just installed Zorin OS, many of them leaving Windows: what to do after installing, Software Updater, installing apps and Windows programs, basic terminal commands, desktop shortcuts and where each setting lives.

```
user@zorin:~$ sudo apt update
```

user your username · **zorin** the computer name · **~** the folder you are in (your home folder) · **\$** means a normal user, **#** means root (administrator). Nothing appears on screen while you type a password; that is normal.

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Yellow italic text (like *<package>*) marks the parts you fill in. In the terminal, paste is Ctrl+Shift+V and copy is Ctrl+Shift+C. Commands that start with **sudo** change the system; read what they do before running them.

After installing



sudogrimoire.com/zorin/

Free searchable handbooks for Linux, Windows and macOS. After a clean Zorin OS install, going through these in order is a good start. You can do each step on its own.

1 Install the updates

Open the Zorin menu, type **update** and open **Software Updater**, then click **Install Now**. Restart when it asks you to.

```
$ sudo apt update && sudo apt upgrade
```

```
$ flatpak update
```

2 Pick a layout

Zorin Appearance > Layout switches the desktop between a Windows-like layout and others. The Core edition includes the Windows and touch layouts.

3 Check the drivers

Proprietary drivers for NVIDIA graphics or some Wi-Fi cards. Zorin menu > **Software & Updates** > Additional Drivers.

```
$ sudo ubuntu-drivers install
```

4 Turn on the firewall

ufw comes installed but disabled.

```
$ sudo ufw enable
```

5 Set up backups

Timeshift takes system snapshots; Backups (Déjà Dup) backs up your home folder.

```
$ sudo apt install timeshift deja-dup
```

6 Connect your phone

Zorin Connect pairs an Android phone over Wi-Fi: notifications, file sharing, clipboard. Install the Zorin Connect app on the phone and open Zorin Connect on the computer.

7

Update firmware

Firmware for laptops, docks and other devices that support LVFS.

```
$ fwupdmgr refresh && fwupdmgr get-updates
```

```
$ fwupdmgr update
```

Meet the terminal

The terminal is the window where you give the computer commands by typing. On Zorin the quickest way is

Ctrl + **Alt** + **T**. Or open the Zorin menu and type "terminal".

TIP Linux is case-sensitive: **Documents** and **documents** are different folders. Put names with spaces in quotes: `cd "New Folder"`.

TIP Type part of a name and press **Tab**: the command or file name completes itself. Press it twice to list the options. This habit saves more time than anything else.

```
$ man <command>
```

Opens the manual page for a command. Quit with **q**, search inside with `/word`.

```
$ <command> --help
```

Shows a short help text and the command's options.

```
$ sudo <command>
```

Runs the command with administrator (root) rights. It asks for your own password; nothing shows while you type.

```
$ clear
```

Clears the screen. Shortcut: **Ctrl** + **L**.

```
$ history
```

Lists the commands you typed before. You can also step back with **↑**.

```
$ which <command>
```

Shows which file a command runs from.

```
$ exit
```

Closes the terminal (or a remote session).

WARNING To stop a running command, press **Ctrl** + **C**. In the terminal, copy is **Ctrl** + **Shift** + **C** and paste is **Ctrl** + **Shift** + **V**.

Files and folders

`~` means your home folder (/home/username). `.` is the current folder, `..` the one above it.

```
$ pwd
```

Prints the folder you are in.

```
$ ls
```

Lists the files in the current folder.

```
$ ls -la
```

Detailed list including hidden files (size, date, permissions). Names starting with a dot are hidden.

```
$ ls -lh
```

Shows sizes in readable KB/MB/GB.

```
$ cd <folder>
```

Enters a folder. Example: `cd Documents`.

```
$ cd ..
```

Goes up one folder.

```
$ cd
```

On its own, goes back to your home folder. `cd -` returns to the previous folder.

```
$ mkdir <folder>
```

Creates a folder. For nested folders: `mkdir -p a/b/c`.

```
$ touch <file>
```

Creates an empty file (or updates the date of an existing one).

```
$ cp <source> <target>
```

Copies a file. For folders use `cp -r`.

```
$ mv <source> <target>
```

Moves or renames. Example: `mv old.txt new.txt`.

```
$ rm <file>
```

Deletes a file. It does not go to the trash and cannot be undone.

```
$ rm -r <folder>
```

Deletes a folder and everything in it. Add `-i` to confirm each file.

```
$ gio trash <file>
```

Sends the file to the Trash instead of deleting it, so it can be restored like on the desktop.

```
$ find ~ -name "*.pdf"
```

Finds every file ending in .pdf in your home folder.

```
$ ln -s <target> <link-name>
```

Creates a shortcut (symbolic link) to a file or folder.

WARNING Never run commands from the internet that start with `sudo rm -rf` unless you understand them. They can wipe the system in seconds.

Reading and editing files

A simple editor that runs in the terminal is enough for changing configuration files. nano is the easiest. It comes preinstalled on Zorin OS.

```
$ cat <file>
```

Prints a short file to the screen.

```
$ less <file>
```

Reads a long file page by page. Space: next page, `/` search, `q` quit.

```
$ head -n 20 <file>
```

Shows the first 20 lines.

```
$ tail -n 50 <file>
```

Shows the last 50 lines. `tail -f` follows new lines live.

```
$ nano <file>
```

Opens the file in nano. For system files add sudo: `sudo nano /etc/hosts`.

```
Ctrl + O
```

nano: save (then Enter).

```
Ctrl + X
```

nano: quit. Asks if there are unsaved changes.

```
Ctrl + W
```

nano: search in the file.

```
Ctrl + K or Ctrl + U
```

nano: cut / paste a line.

```
$ xdg-open <file>
```

Opens the file with its default app (PDF, image, folder...). `xdg-open .` opens the current folder in the file manager.

Installing software: APT

APT is Zorin OS's package manager: it downloads software from the repositories, installs, updates and removes it. `apt update` only refreshes the package list; `apt upgrade` does the actual updating.

```
$ sudo apt update
```

Refreshes the package list from the repositories. Run it before installing or upgrading.

```
$ sudo apt upgrade
```

Updates installed packages.

```
$ sudo apt full-upgrade
```

Also allows removing packages if an upgrade requires it (needed for kernel transitions).

```
$ sudo apt install <package>
```

Installs software. You can list several: `sudo apt install vlc gimp`.

```
$ sudo apt remove <package>
```

Removes software; system-wide config files stay.

```
$ sudo apt purge <package>
```

Removes software together with its config files.

```
$ sudo apt autoremove
```

Cleans up packages that nothing needs anymore.

```
$ apt search <word>
```

Searches package names and descriptions.

```
$ apt show <package>
```

Shows a package's version, size and description.

```
$ apt list --installed
```

Lists all installed packages. To filter: `apt list --installed | grep firefox`.

```
$ apt list --upgradable
```

Packages with pending updates.

```
$ sudo apt install ./<file>.deb
```

Installs a downloaded .deb file with its dependencies. The leading `./` matters.

TIP `apt` is for everyday use. `apt-get`, which you'll see in scripts and older guides, does the same job; its output doesn't change between versions, so scripts prefer it.

Software store, Flatpak and Snap

The Software app shows apps from three sources: APT packages, Flatpak (Flathub) and Snap. Each app page shows the source in a menu at the top right.

Zorin menu > Software

Search, install, remove. The Updates tab lists app updates.

```
$ sudo apt install <package>
```

Installs an APT package from the terminal.

```
$ flatpak install flathub <app-id>
```

Installs a Flatpak app; the ID is shown on flathub.org.

```
$ snap list
```

Installed Snap apps.

TIP Windows apps. Double-click a .exe file: Zorin offers to install Wine or suggests a Linux alternative. Many Windows programs run this way, but not all.

TIP A downloaded **.deb** file installs with a double-click, or with `sudo apt install ./file.deb`.

Installing apps with Flatpak

Flatpak apps run isolated from the system and bring their own libraries. When the distribution's version is old or missing, this is the easiest way to get desktop apps.

TIP Flatpak and Flathub come set up on Zorin OS; the Software app shows Flatpak apps.

```
$ flatpak search <name>
```

Searches Flathub and shows the full app ID (e.g. com.spotify.Client).

```
$ flatpak install flathub <app-id>
```

Installs the app. Example: `flatpak install flathub com.discordapp.Discord`.

```
$ flatpak update
```

Updates all Flatpak apps.

```
$ flatpak list --app
```

Lists installed Flatpak apps.

```
$ flatpak uninstall <app-id>
```

Removes the app. Add `--delete-data` to remove its data too.

```
$ flatpak uninstall --unused
```

Frees space by removing runtimes nothing uses anymore.

```
$ flatpak run <app-id>
```

Starts the app from the terminal; handy for seeing error messages.

TIP To edit Flatpak permissions (file access, camera, etc.) visually, install Flatseal: `flatpak install flathub com.github.tchx84.Flatseal`.

TIP If you downloaded an AppImage, make it executable: `chmod +x App.AppImage`, then `./App.AppImage`. If it doesn't start, you need `sudo apt install libfuse2t64`.

System information and resources

The equivalent of Windows Task Manager is System Monitor on both GNOME and KDE. The same information is available in the terminal.

```
$ cat /etc/os-release
```

Distribution name and version.

```
$ hostnamectl
```

Computer name, operating system, kernel and hardware summary.

```
$ uname -r
```

Version of the running Linux kernel.

```
$ df -h
```

Shows how much free space is left on each disk.

```
$ du -sh *
```

Space used by each file and folder in the current folder.

```
$ free -h
```

RAM and swap usage.

```
$ top
```

Live process list. Quit with `q`. For a nicer one: `sudo apt install htop` or `bttop`.

```
$ sudo apt install fastfetch
```

A tool that shows a system summary with a logo; run `fastfetch` after installing.

```
$ lscpu
```

Processor information.

```
$ lspci
```

Lists PCI devices such as the graphics and network cards.

```
$ lsusb
```

Lists connected USB devices.

```
$ pkill <program-name>
```

Closes a frozen program by name. Example: `pkill firefox`.

```
$ kill -9 <PID>
```

Force-kills a process by number (PID). `top` or `pgrep firefox` gives you the PID.

Shut down, restart, sessions

You can also use the desktop's power menu; the terminal equivalents are:

```
$ systemctl poweroff
```

Shuts the computer down.

```
$ systemctl reboot
```

Restarts.

```
$ systemctl suspend
```

Puts it to sleep (suspend).

```
$ loginctl terminate-session $XDG_SESSION_ID
```

Logs out (works regardless of desktop).

Super + **L**

Locks the screen (GNOME and KDE).

Ctrl + **Alt** + **Delete**

Opens the log out / power off dialog.

Zorin desktop shortcuts

With the default Windows-like layout, most shortcuts work as they do on Windows. Change them in Settings > Keyboard > Keyboard Shortcuts.

Super	Opens the Zorin menu. Start typing to search apps and settings.
Ctrl + Alt + T	Opens a terminal.
Super + E	Opens the Home folder in Files.
Super + D	Shows the desktop.
Super + L	Locks the screen.
Alt + Tab	Switches between windows.
Super + Left or Super + Right	Snaps the window to the left or right half of the screen.
Super + Up or Super + Down	Maximizes / restores the window.
Super + A	Shows all apps.
Ctrl + Alt + Left or Ctrl + Alt + Right	Switches workspace.
Print	Opens the screenshot tool.

Terminal and Bash shortcuts

The first group belongs to the terminal window (mostly the same in GNOME Terminal, Console, Konsole and Ptyxis), the second to the command line itself (Bash).

Ctrl + Shift + T	New tab.
Ctrl + Shift + N	New window.
Ctrl + Shift + W	Close tab.
Ctrl + Page Up or Ctrl + Page Down	Switch between tabs.
Ctrl + Shift + C or Ctrl + Shift + V	Copy / paste.
Ctrl + + or Ctrl + -	Bigger / smaller text. Ctrl+0 resets.
Ctrl + Shift + F	Search the output.
F11	Full screen.
Tab	Complete a command or file name. Twice: list the options.
↑ or ↓	Previous / next command.
Ctrl + R	Search history: finds an old command as you type. Ctrl+R again goes further back, Enter runs it.
Ctrl + C	Stop the running command or cancel the line you typed.
Ctrl + D	Log out (same as exit on an empty line).
Ctrl + L	Clear the screen.
Ctrl + A or Ctrl + E	Move to the start / end of the line.

Ctrl + **U** or **Ctrl** + **K**

Delete from the cursor to the start / end of the line.

Ctrl + **W**

Delete the word before the cursor.

Alt + **B** or **Alt** + **F**

Move back / forward one word.

Ctrl + **Z**

Pause the running command and send it to the background. **fg** brings it back.

!!

Repeats the last command. Common use: **sudo !!** reruns the last command with sudo.

Files (Nautilus) shortcuts

GNOME's file manager is the Files app. Most shortcuts are the same in KDE's Dolphin.

Ctrl + H	Show / hide hidden files.
Ctrl + L	Type a path into the address bar (e.g. /etc).
F2	Rename. With several files selected, batch rename opens.
Ctrl + Shift + N	New folder.
Delete or Shift + Delete	Move to Trash / delete permanently.
Ctrl + F	Search in the folder.
Alt + ↑	Go up to the parent folder.
Alt + ← or Alt + →	Back / forward.
Ctrl + T	New tab.
Ctrl + 1 or Ctrl + 2	List / grid view.
Ctrl + I	Properties of the selected item.
Space	Quick preview of the selected file (needs the sushi package: <code>sudo apt install sushi</code>).

TIP To add a folder to the sidebar, right-click it > Add to Bookmarks, or press Ctrl+D.

Zorin-specific settings

Zorin adds its own appearance tool and a few extra apps to a GNOME base.

Zorin menu > Zorin Appearance > Layout	Desktop layout: Windows-like, touch, and (in Pro) macOS-like and others.
Zorin Appearance > Theme	Light or dark, and the accent color.
Zorin Appearance > Taskbar	Taskbar position, size, auto-hide and which items it shows.
Zorin Appearance > Desktop	Desktop icons, wallpaper and window effects.
Zorin menu > Zorin Connect	Pairs an Android phone over Wi-Fi.
Software & Updates > Updates	How often Zorin checks for updates and installs security updates.
Software & Updates > Additional Drivers	NVIDIA and other proprietary drivers.

Where is that setting? (GNOME)

On GNOME almost everything is in the Settings app. The quickest way in: press Super and type the setting's name (e.g. "display", "sound", "bluetooth"). Menu names can differ slightly between GNOME versions.

Settings > Wi-Fi	Connect to wireless networks, forget saved ones, share with a QR code.
Settings > Network	Wired connection, adding a VPN, proxy.
Settings > Bluetooth	Pair headphones, mice, phones.
Settings > Displays	Resolution, refresh rate, scaling (125%, 150%...), multi-monitor layout, Night Light.
Settings > Sound	Output/input device, volume levels, per-app volume.
Settings > Power	Power mode (Power Saver / Balanced / Performance), screen blank timeout, automatic suspend, battery percentage.
Settings > Multitasking	Hot corner, number of workspaces, edge tiling.
Settings > Appearance	Light/dark style, accent color, wallpaper.
Settings > Apps	App permissions and notifications; Default Apps (browser, mail, music, video).
Settings > Notifications	Do Not Disturb, lock screen notifications, per-app notifications.
Settings > Online Accounts	Add Google, Microsoft or Nextcloud accounts; Drive/OneDrive appear in Files.
Settings > Mouse & Touchpad	Pointer speed, tap to click, natural scrolling.
Settings > Keyboard	Input sources, Compose key, View and Customize Shortcuts.

Settings > Keyboard > View and Customize Shortcuts > Custom Shortcuts	Add your own shortcut. Example: Name "Terminal", Command <code>gnome-terminal</code>, Shortcut Ctrl+Alt+T.
Settings > Printers	Add printers; network printers are usually found automatically.
Settings > Accessibility	Large text, zoom, screen reader, sticky keys, cursor size.
Settings > Privacy & Security	Screen lock delay, location services, file history and automatic trash emptying.
Settings > System > Region & Language	Interface language, date/number/currency formats.
Settings > System > Date & Time	Time zone, automatic time, 24-hour format.
Settings > System > Users	New users, passwords, administrator rights, automatic login.
Settings > System > About	Version, processor, RAM and disk information.
Tweaks > Windows Titlebars	Minimize / maximize buttons.
Tweaks > Fonts	Interface, document and monospace fonts; font scaling.
Tweaks > Startup Applications	Apps that start automatically when you log in.
Disks app	Format disks, create partitions, SMART health data, write disk images.

USB drives and disks

USB drives appear in the file manager's sidebar and are mounted under `/media/` or `/run/media/`. Click the  icon next to it before unplugging.

```
$ lsblk
```

Shows all disks and partitions as a tree (sda, nvme0n1, etc.).

```
$ lsblk -f
```

Also shows each partition's file system (ext4, btrfs, ntfs, exfat) and label.

```
$ udisksctl mount -b /dev/<sdb1>
```

Mounts a partition without sudo.

```
$ udisksctl unmount -b /dev/<sdb1>
```

Unmounts it safely.

Disks > select the device > : > Format Disk

Wipes the USB drive. To use it on both Windows and Linux, create an exFAT partition.

```
$ flatpak install flathub  
io.gitlab.adhami3310.Impression
```

Impression: writes an ISO file to a USB drive to make an install drive.

WARNING When writing a disk with `dd` in the terminal, picking the wrong target (`/dev/sdX`) erases that whole disk. Check twice with `lsblk` first.

Common problems

The situations new Zorin users most often get stuck on, and the first thing to try.

TIP "Could not get lock /var/lib/dpkg/lock-frontent". Software Updater or Software is busy. Wait until it finishes; don't delete the lock file.

TIP A Windows program doesn't start. Not every .exe runs under Wine. Look for a Linux version or an alternative in Software first.

TIP An Applmage won't start. `sudo apt install libfuse2t64`.

TIP Wi-Fi or NVIDIA doesn't work. Software & Updates > Additional Drivers, or `sudo ubuntu-drivers install`. It may need an internet cable first.

```
$ systemctl --user restart pipewire wireplumber
```

If sound suddenly stops, restarts the sound system without logging out.

TIP The whole desktop froze. Switch to a text console with Ctrl+Alt+F3, log in and run `sudo systemctl restart gdm3`. Open work will be lost.

TIP "command not found". Zorin usually suggests which package to install; run the command it suggests.

Glossary

Words you'll often see in forums and documentation.

Core / Lite / Education / Pro

Zorin's editions. Core is free and the most common; Lite is for older computers; Education adds learning apps; Pro is paid and adds more layouts and apps.

Base

Zorin OS 18 is built on Ubuntu 24.04 LTS, so most Ubuntu 24.04 ("noble") instructions also work.

Terminal / shell

The terminal is the window you type in; the shell is the program that interprets the commands. The default shell is Bash.

sudo

Means "run this command as administrator". The root account is locked; everything is done with sudo.

APT / .deb

The package system Zorin inherits from Ubuntu, and its package format.

Flatpak / Snap

Two distribution-independent app formats; both show up in Software.

Wine

A layer that runs many Windows programs on Linux.

/etc, /usr, /var, /home

System settings / programs / changing data and logs / user folders.

Commands are written for Zorin OS 18 Core (based on Ubuntu 24.04 LTS; GNOME, APT, Flatpak, Snap). Menu names follow the English interface. Commands that start with sudo change the system; read what they do before running them.