

## Using nl to number lines

This week's tip shows you how to use `nl` to add line numbers to a file. One of the more common commands to add line numbers is simply `cat -n`. However, `nl` adds extra functionality (such as controlling for white space, zero padding, and column justification).

To use `nl` with its default options, type `nl filename`. This will output the file with line numbers to standard out. Empty lines will be skipped by default.

### Code Listing 1: Example Usage

```
// basic use
% nl filename

// Include empty lines
% nl -ba filename

// Left justified number column
% nl -nln filename
```

For more information on using `nl` see `man nl` or `info nl`.

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