Do you wish your Linux PC used less RAM? Unsure of what to do to improve memory usage? We can help! Here are 5 ways to reduce RAM usage on Linux!

# 1. Install a lightweight Linux distribution

Modern Linux distributions like Ubuntu, Fedora, or OpenSUSE, though much lighter than Windows or Mac, are not exactly optimized for computers with limited RAM. So, If you're trying to reduce your memory on Linux, it's a great idea to switch to a more lightweight distribution, and ships with slimmer, less memory-intensive applications.
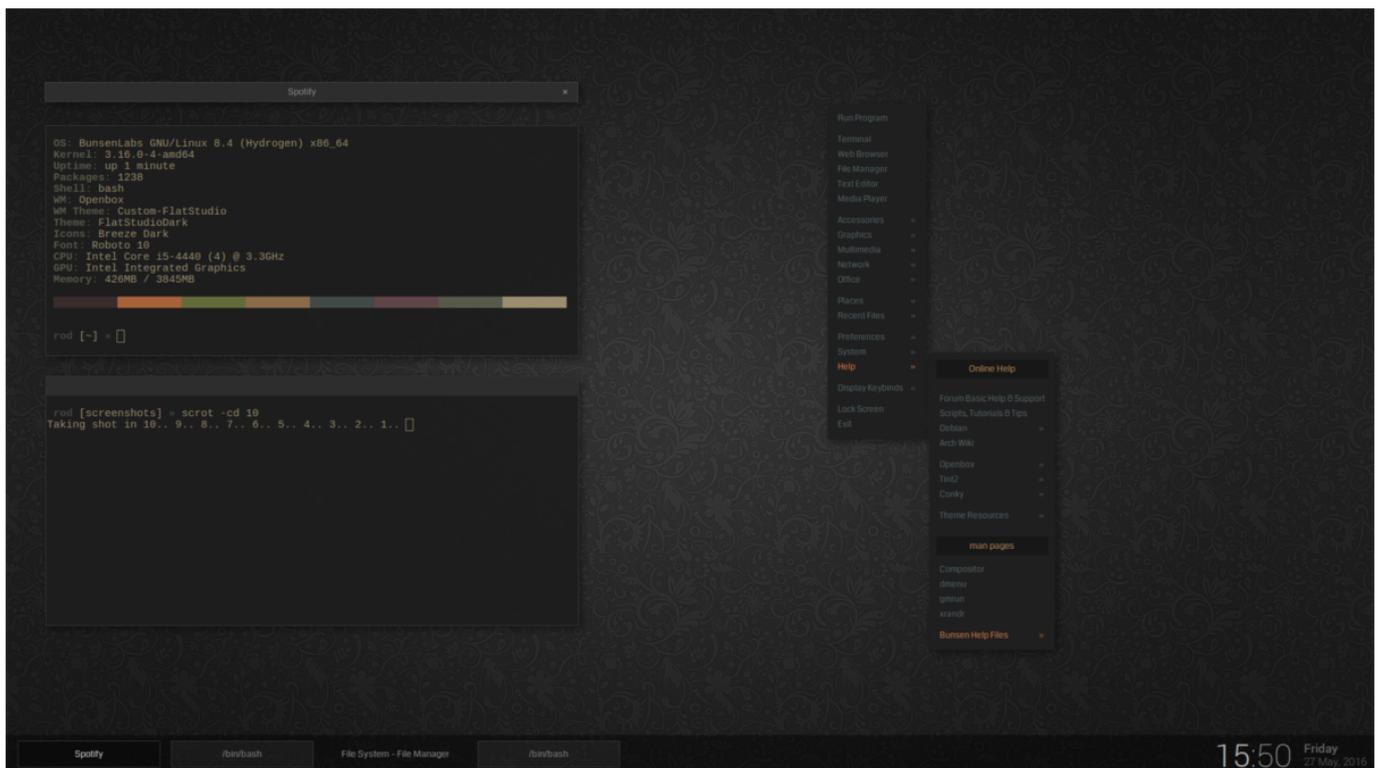
There are a lot of great lightweight Linux operating systems out there that make better use of machines with low RAM. So many in fact that we could make an entire list dedicated to the best lightweight ones. However, since we need to be brief, the best ones to try out are Lubuntu,

Busenlabs Linux, Bohdi Linux, or MX Linux.

2. Switch to LXQt
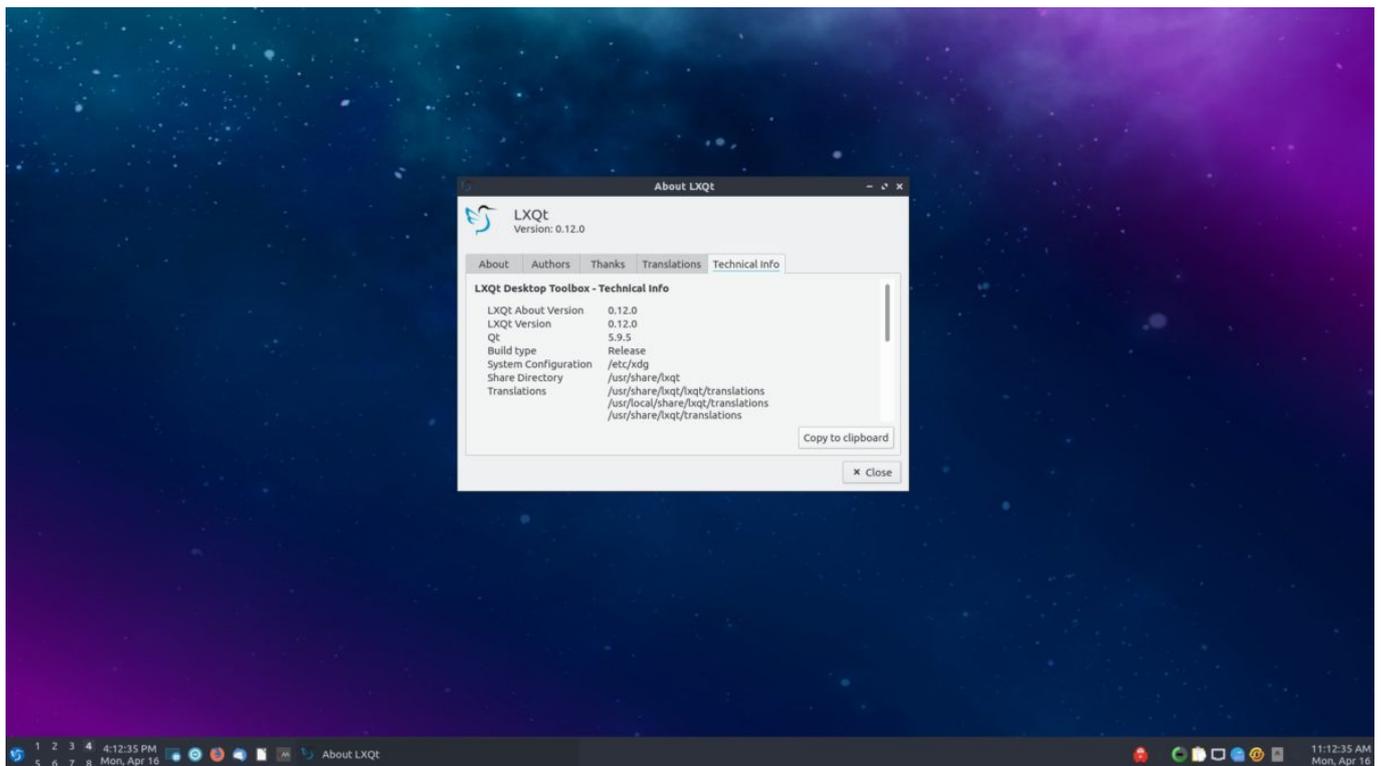
There are a lot of different desktop environments out there on the Linux platform. Sadly, a lot of these desktop environments, though good, are heavy on system resources, especially RAM. If you're trying to reduce RAM usage on your Linux PC, it's best to ditch the eye-candy in favor of the LXQt desktop environment.

Why LXQt? Why not Mate, XFCE4, or something else? Well, LXQt is exceptionally lightweight, and can famously operate on as little as 256 MB of RAM! It's pretty much perfect for desktops and laptops that do not have a lot of power.

Install LXQt

LXQt is supported on a wide variety of Linux operating systems, so it's quite easy to install. To start the installation of LXQt, open up a terminal window by pressing **Ctrl + Alt + T** or **Ctrl + Shift + T** on the keyboard. Then, follow the command-line instructions that match the Linux operating system you use.

Note: don't want to go load up LXQt on your Linux PC? Consider installing Lubuntu instead. It's a great operating system that will get you going with the LXQt desktop in minutes! It comes with excellent, lightweight apps pre-installed, and a lot of optimizations to deliver you a first-class experience, even if you do not have a lot of system resources!

Ubuntu

```
sudo apt install lubuntu-desktop
```

Debian

```
sudo apt-get install task-lxqt-desktop
```
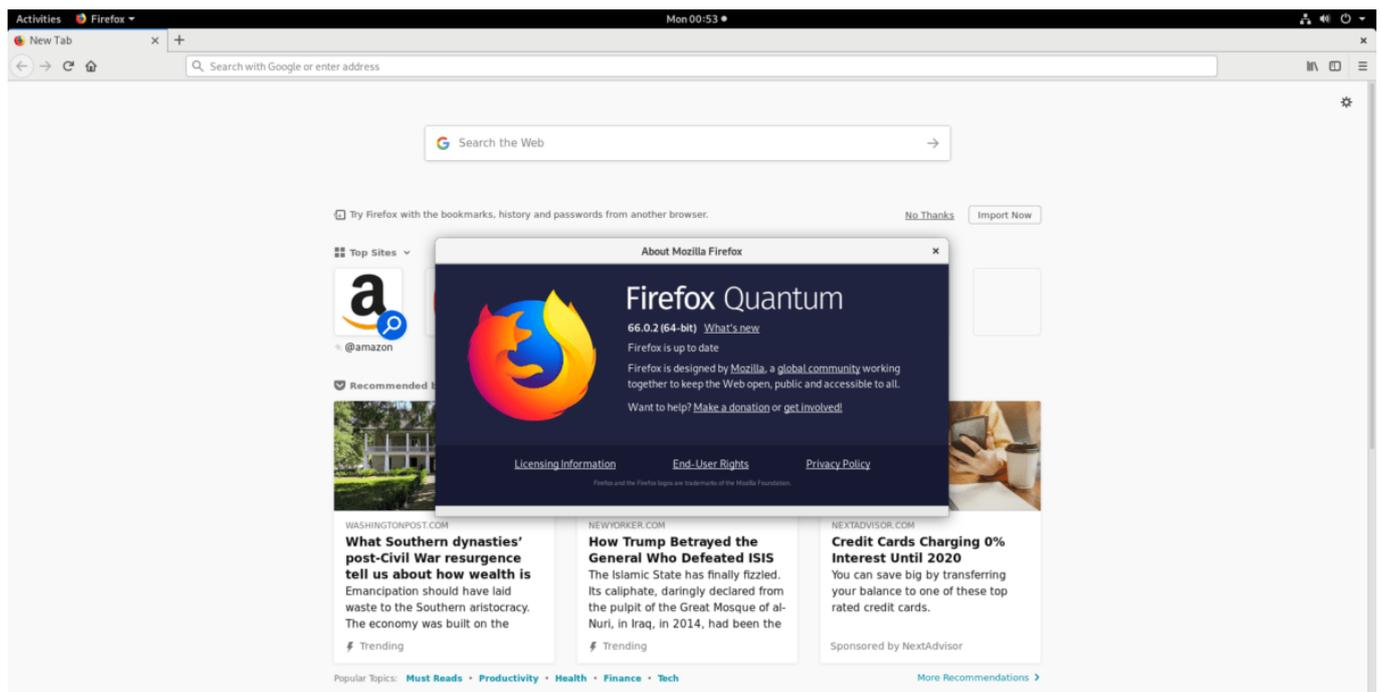
Arch Linux

```
sudo pacman -S lxqt
```

Fedora

```
sudo dnf install @lxqt
```

OpenSUSE

```
sudo zypper in -t pattern lxqt
```

After installing the LXQt desktop environment on your Linux PC, log out of your current session and return to the login screen. Then, from there, select "LXQt" in the session list.

3. Switch to Firefox

Even on the Linux platform, everyone's favorite browser tends to be Google Chrome, or at the very least, Chromium (the open-source counterpart to Chome). While there's no arguing that these browsers are useful, and have a lot of convenience and features, they're RAM killers. Instead, if you want to free up some system memory, consider switching to the Firefox browser. It uses much less RAM than Chrome/Chromium and supports similar features such as bookmark syncing, mobile app support, and playback of proprietary video streams (Netflix/Hulu/Amazon).

All Linux operating systems use Mozilla Firefox as their default browser. So, it's likely you will not need to install Firefox on your Linux PC to switch to it from Chrome. If for some reason you do not already have the Firefox browser set up on your Linux PC, open up a terminal by pressing **Ctrl + Alt + T** or **Ctrl + Shift + T** on the keyboard and follow the command-line instructions outlined below.

Ubuntu

```
sudo apt install firefox
```

Debian

```
sudo apt-get install firefox-esr
```

Arch Linux

```
sudo pacman -S firefox
```

Fedora

```
sudo dnf install firefox
```

OpenSUSE

```
sudo zypper install MozillaFirefox
```

Generic Linux

Need to get Firefox on a Linux operating system not covered in this article? Follow this guide here!

4. Disable startup programs

Disabling startup items on your Linux PC is a quick way to reduce RAM usage. Why? Startup items tend to add up and slowly chip away at your available system memory. Programs like Dropbox, Discord, and Steam are some of the biggest offenders of this.

To disable startup programs on Linux, autostart entries need to be removed. The easiest way to do this is to open up a terminal window and follow the command-line instructions below.

```
cd ~/.config/autostart
rm *.desktop
```

Alternatively, if you don't want to remove startup entries in the command-line, consider following our guides on startup entries for Gnome or KDE.

5. Kill idle/background programs

Looking to free up some extra RAM on your Linux PC on the fly? Consider installing a task manager that will allow you to end programs running in the background, eating up too much memory.

There are many great task managers on Linux, but by far the best one to install is Gnome System Monitor. It breaks down system information in an easy to read way, and the user interface is clean and simple.

To get your hands on the Gnome System Monitor, open up a terminal window. Then, follow the command-line instructions below that correspond with the Linux operating system you use.

Note: if you run into issues using Gnome System Monitor, consider trying out KSysGuard or Htop.

Ubuntu

```
sudo apt install gnome-system-monitor
```

Debian

```
sudo apt-get install gnome-system-monitor
```

Arch Linux

```
sudo pacman -S gnome-system-monitor
```

Fedora

```
sudo dnf install gnome-system-monitor
```

OpenSUSE

```
sudo zypper install gnome-system-monitor
```

Once the Gnome System Monitor app is installed on your Linux PC, open it up by pressing **Alt + F2** and writing in the following command in the quick launch box.

```
gnome-system-monitor
```

Find the "memory" column in the Gnome System Monitor application and click on it with the mouse. Selecting "memory" will automatically sort process with the highest RAM usage to the top. Then, find a process you wish to end, right-click on it, and select "End" or "Kill."
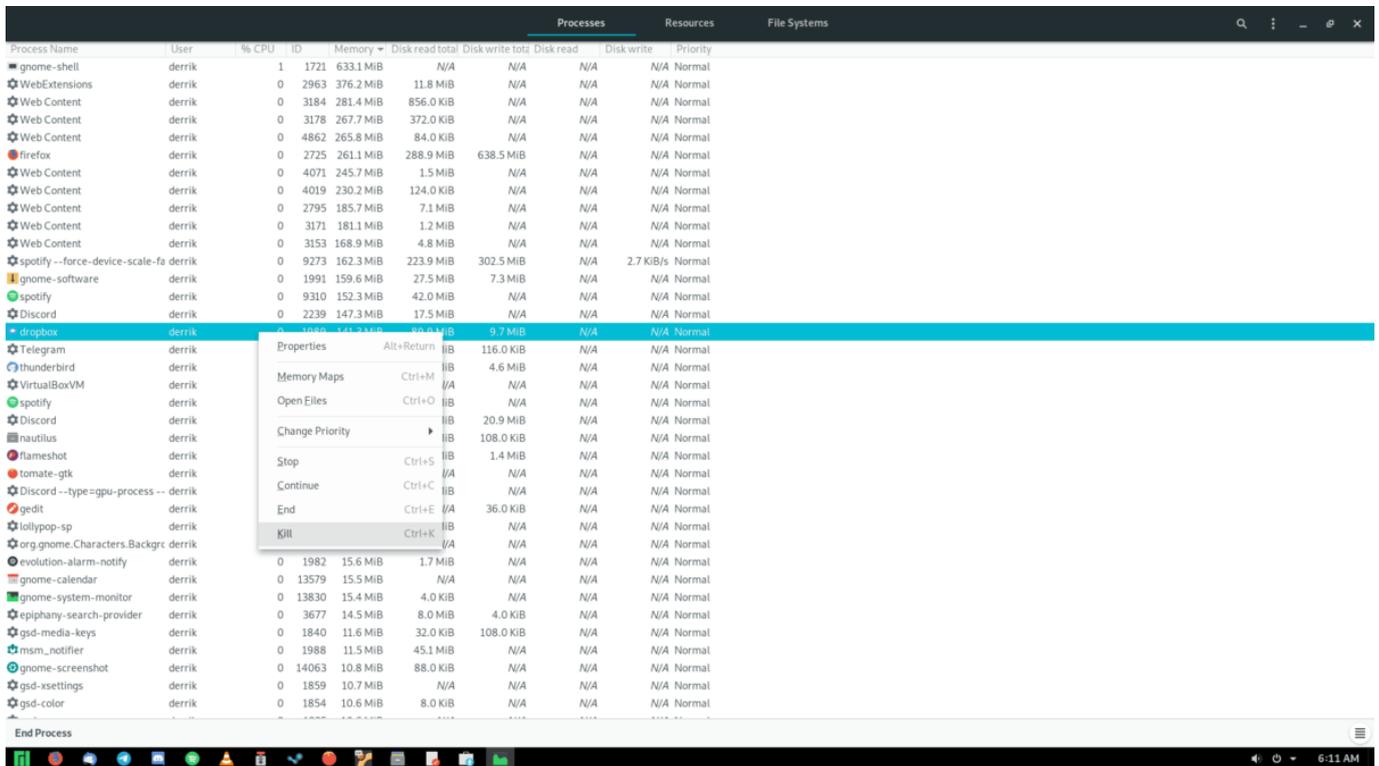
Be sure only to end or kill a process that is not important to the system. If a system process is using a lot of RAM, reboot to resolve the problem instead!

Conclusion

In this list, we went over 5 ways to reduce memory usage on Linux. What tricks do you use on your PC to minimize RAM usage? Let us know in the comment section below!

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