

How to use yum-cron to automatically update RHEL/CentOS Linux

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The yum command line tool is used to install and update software packages under RHEL / CentOS Linux server. I know how to apply updates using `yum update command line`, but I would like to use cron to update packages where appropriate manually. How do I configure yum to install software patches/updates `automatically with cron`?

You need to install yum-cron package. It provides files needed to run yum updates as a cron job. Install this package if you want auto yum updates nightly via cron.

Type the following `yum command` on:

```
$ sudo yum install yum-cron
```

```
[root@centos7-box ~]# yum -y install yum-cron
Resolving Dependencies
--> Running transaction check
--> Package yum-cron.noarch 0:3.4.3-154.el7.centos.1 will be installed
--> Finished Dependency Resolution

Dependencies Resolved

=====
Package                Arch          Version              Repository            Size
=====
Installing:
yum-cron                noarch        3.4.3-154.el7.centos.1 updates               62 k
=====

Transaction Summary
=====
Install 1 Package

Total download size: 62 k
Installed size: 51 k
Downloading packages:
yum-cron-3.4.3-154.el7.centos.1.noarch.rpm | 62 kB 00:00:00
Running transaction check
Running transaction test
Transaction test succeeded
Running transaction
  Installing : yum-cron-3.4.3-154.el7.centos.1.noarch 1/1
  Verifying  : yum-cron-3.4.3-154.el7.centos.1.noarch 1/1

Installed:
yum-cron.noarch 0:3.4.3-154.el7.centos.1

Complete!
[root@centos7-box ~]#
```

Turn on service using systemctl command on **CentOS/RHEL 7.x**:

```
$ sudo systemctl enable yum-cron.service
```

```
$ sudo systemctl start yum-cron.service
```

```
$ sudo systemctl status yum-cron.service
```

If you are using **CentOS/RHEL 6.x**, run:

```
$ sudo chkconfig yum-cron on
```

```
$ sudo service yum-cron start
```

```

[root@centos7-box ~]# systemctl enable yum-cron.service
[root@centos7-box ~]#
[root@centos7-box ~]# systemctl start yum-cron.service
[root@centos7-box ~]#
[root@centos7-box ~]# systemctl status yum-cron.service
● yum-cron.service - Run automatic yum updates as a cron job
   Loaded: loaded (/usr/lib/systemd/system/yum-cron.service; enabled; vendor preset: disabled)
   Active: active (exited) since Sat 2018-02-03 00:52:34 IST; 3s ago
     Process: 3375 ExecStart=/bin/touch /var/lock/subsys/yum-cron (code=exited, status=0/SUCCESS)
    Main PID: 3375 (code=exited, status=0/SUCCESS)

Feb 03 00:52:34 centos7-box systemd[1]: Starting Run automatic yum updates as a cron job...
Feb 03 00:52:34 centos7-box systemd[1]: Started Run automatic yum updates as a cron job.
[root@centos7-box ~]#

```

yum-cron is an alternate interface to yum. Very convenient way to call yum from cron. It provides methods to keep repository metadata up to date, and to check for, download, and apply updates. Rather than accepting many different command line arguments, the different functions of yum-cron can be accessed through config files.

You need to edit /etc/yum/yum-cron.conf and /etc/yum/yum-cron-hourly.conf files using a text editor such as vi command:

```
$ sudo vi /etc/yum/yum-cron.conf
```

Make sure updates should be applied when they are available

```
apply_updates = yes
```

You can set the address to send email messages from. Please note that 'localhost' will be replaced with the value of system_name.

```
email_from = root@localhost
```

List of addresses to send messages to.

```
email_to = your-it-support@some-domain-name
```

Name of the host to connect to to send email messages.

```
email_host = localhost
```

If you **do not want to update kernel package add the following on CentOS/RHEL 7.x:**

```
exclude=kernel*
```

For RHEL/CentOS 6.x add **the following to exclude kernel package from updating:**

```
YUM_PARAMETER=kernel*
```

Save and close the file in vi/vim. You also need to update /etc/yum/yum-cron-hourly.conf file if you want to apply update hourly. Otherwise /etc/yum/yum-cron.conf will run on

daily using the following cron job (us `cat command`:

```
$ cat /etc/cron.daily/0yum-daily.cron
```

Sample outputs:

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