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Keeping a command running after you close SSH: tmux and screen

VPS & Servers

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MozOut Mozambique

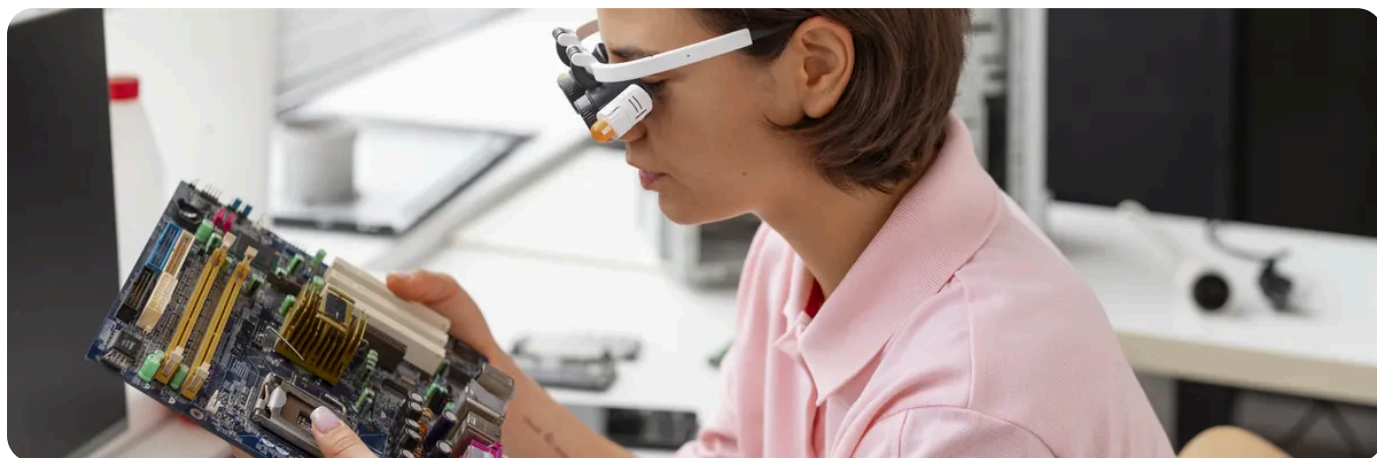
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Keeping a command running after you close SSH: tmux and screen

📁 VPS & Servers 📅 Created on **October 15, 2026** ⌚ 2 min read



The short answer: when you close the SSH window, or the connection drops, the system ends the programs that were running in it. **tmux** (and **screen**) solve that: they open a session that **keeps running on the server** even without you, and that you return to whenever you like.

➡ tmux, the essentials

- 1 **Install it**, if it is not there: `sudo apt install tmux` (Ubuntu and Debian).
- 2 **Open a named session:** `tmux new -s work`. Run the slow command in it (a big copy, a migration, an `rsync`).
- 3 **Leave without closing it:** press `Ctrl+b`, release, then `d`. You are back at the normal command line and the session keeps running.
- 4 **See the sessions that exist:** `tmux ls`.
- 5 **Go back to it**, even after closing SSH and logging in again: `tmux attach -t work`.
- 6 **End it** when done: type `exit` inside it, or `tmux kill-session -t work` from outside.

↻ The same with screen

To	screen
Open a session	<code>screen -S work</code>

To	screen
Leave without closing	<code>Ctrl+a</code> , release, and <code>d</code>
See the sessions	<code>screen -ls</code>
Go back to one	<code>screen -r work</code>

? What about nohup?

For a single command you do not need to watch afterwards, `nohup` is enough: `nohup ./my-script.sh &`. The output goes to the file `nohup.out`. But you cannot “walk back into” it. To watch it live, use tmux.



A tmux session does not survive a server restart.

For an application that must always be running, and come back by itself after a restart, do not use tmux: use a system service (systemd). See [FastAPI on a VPS](#), which shows an example.



If your SSH connection drops often, see [Common VPS and Cloud errors](#). And for tasks that run at set times, do not use sessions: see [Cron jobs](#).

🔊 NEED A HAND?

Have a long task on a VPS and not sure how to leave it running safely? Open a ticket describing what you want to do.

 [Open a support ticket](#) →

🔗 SEE ALSO

[Cron jobs: what they are for and how to create one](#)



[FastAPI on a VPS: uvicorn workers, proxy headers and a service that restarts](#)



[How to see what is using CPU, memory and disk on your VPS](#)



[Common VPS and Cloud errors: SSH, memory, disk and reboots](#)





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TAX ID (NUIT)	401 191 607
LEGAL ENTITY NO. (NUEL)	105 045 974
ECONOMIC ACTIVITY CODE (CAE)	62022
REGISTERED OFFICE	Bairro 7 de Setembro Vilankulo 1304 · CEP 0411-02, Inhambane, Mozambique
CONTACT	info@mozout.co.mz · +258 84 635 1111 · +258 86 635 1111 · www.mozout.co.mz
OPENING HOURS	Monday to Friday - 08 AM to 04 PM Saturday & Sunday - Closed



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