

pfSense Console Menu – Part 1

7 Tricks You May Not Know About

Overview

The pfSense® webConfigurator is so easy to use, you might not know how powerful the console menu is. In this edition of the *Why To Series*, we'll discuss some options that you might not know are there.

Whether you're using a serial connection or a VGA/HDMI connection, the menu is the same. As shown below, there are 17 (0-16) options on the menu. In this edition, we'll talk about the most common ones.

If you're using a serial connection and need help connecting, we have instructions on our website. Here is an example of connecting to the console port for the [SG-3100](#). Be sure to look at the **Quick Start Guide** for your Netgate® product to get complete instructions.

```
0) Logout (SSH only)          9) pfTop
1) Assign Interfaces          10) Filter Logs
2) Set interface(s) IP address 11) Restart webConfigurator
3) Reset webConfigurator password 12) PHP shell + pfSense tools
4) Reset to factory defaults  13) Update from console
5) Reboot system             14) Enable Secure Shell (sshd)
6) Halt system               15) Restore recent configuration
7) Ping host                 16) Restart PHP-FPM
8) Shell

Enter an option: █
```

1) Assign interfaces

This option is easy to use and the console is the perfect place to use it if you need to change interface configuration from the default or current settings. Since you're connected by a serial or video cable, you don't have to worry about losing network connectivity to the webConfigurator.

2) Set interface(s) IP address

Changing an interface IP address is a task that's also perfectly suited for the console menu. You can change one interface, or all of them, and you don't have to worry about losing your connection to the webConfigurator. And, like *Assigning interfaces*, it's a quick and easy operation to perform.

3) Reset webConfigurator password

If you ever get locked out of the webConfigurator, either accidentally or maliciously, this option resets the password back to the default username and password (admin / pfsense). This feature can save you from having to perform a complete reinstallation of pfSense from memstick, as well as installing and configuring any packages or rules.

A word of caution is in order here. If you reset the webConfigurator password, be sure to change it once you get back in. You do not want to risk a security breach by leaving the password as the default. Go to the **System -> User Manager** menu from the pfSense dashboard to change your admin password.

4) Reset to factory defaults

This is one of the best kept secrets of the console menu. With this choice, you can wipe out your configuration, set it back to factory default, and begin to reconfigure the pfSense appliance again. This is a great feature if you need to start over or if something isn't working right and you can't track it down. The config.xml file will be refreshed and the firewall will reboot when this option is selected.

Be aware that resetting back to factory defaults works in most instances, but there are times when a fresh memstick install is required. And like resetting the webConfigurator password, be sure to change the password from the default (pfSense).

5) Reboot system

If you need to reboot your firewall, option 5 is a quick and easy way to do this. This option is available in the webConfigurator as well, under the Diagnostics menu, but unlike the webConfigurator, you get to see what's actually happening with the console menu.

Using this option also ensures a graceful shutdown before rebooting. Learn more on graceful shutdowns in Option 6 below or by reviewing our previous *Why To Series* paper on [Graceful Shutdowns](#).

6) Halt system

If you have to power down the firewall, you can choose Option 6 from the console menu, or you can use the Halt System option in the Diagnostics menu of the webConfigurator. Using the console option is quick and easy. It also gives you a view of what's happening to the firewall as it shuts down.

This option also ensures a graceful shutdown. *Never force an abrupt power loss by pulling out the power cable or turning off the rocker switch on the back of the power supply on a rackmount system.* A graceful shutdown ensures all files are closed out properly to ensure data integrity. Shutting down gracefully is considered a **best practice** for home users and network administrators alike.

Final Tip – Set a Console Password

Because the console menu has such powerful options, like resetting the webConfigurator password, it is a best practice to password protect the console itself. This step cannot be performed from *within* the console, you have to do it from the webConfigurator.

From the pfSense Dashboard, go to the **System -> Advanced** menu at the bottom of the page. Place a check in the box beside **Password protect the console menu** to set the same admin password as the webConfigurator.

Summary

As shown, these are just a few of the things you can do from the console. If you're administrating a pfSense firewall and you aren't using the console, you're missing out on some powerful features.

About Netgate

Netgate, the open-source secure networking company, delivers superior value firewall, VPN, and routing solutions. With over 1 million active pfSense installations – businesses, educational institutions, and government agencies around the world depend on Netgate for cloud or premises, enterprise ready, secure networking solutions.

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