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dist : ...](#)

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for PHP - what is
it?](#)

[Need Suggestions
About ISPConfig3](#)

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apache error after
upgrade](#)

[Ipsec](#)

[Additional
List-Form-Feature:
Clear Filters](#)

[IMAP now
downloading mail](#)

...

[Preventing
dynamically-served
files from being](#)

...

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not working...](#)

[Ubuntu change
default gateway -
please help](#)

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Gathering \(TCG\) life
keeper](#)

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Clicking 'preview' : may
wipe computer hard drive](#)

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Comes Next](#)

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should know: PyGPGME](#)

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Upgrade Debian Lenny To Squeeze In A Few Simple Steps

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Submitted by [Debinix](#) ([Contact Author](#)) ([Forums](#)) on Mon, 2011-02-07 17:00. ::

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Upgrade Debian Lenny To Squeeze In A Few Simple Steps

One rather old laptop and one server were the test objects for this. Both systems did not have any RAID devices and use a simple partitioning scheme from a default basic Lenny install. If your setup deviates from this, it's highly recommended to read all details of the Debian Release Notes before you continue. Be warned. All commands are run as root or as user who recommends to use `apt-get` for the Squeeze upgrade process.

As with all upgrades, begin with a backup of your critical data, and that will be the users data in `/home/your-user`. Also back up the content of all configurations files. The latter can quickly be archived:

```
tar -czvf host.etc.tar.gz /etc
```

Move your files for safe storage on a backup drive.

Edit your Apt sources list file

To prepare for the installer, we need to get to a point where the package system is in a clean state. Move the *pref* from the directory if used. If you have a very complicated Debian source file, I would recommend that this is simply the original install.

Open up a command line editor and reduce */etc/apt/sources.list* to something similar to only:

```
deb http://ftp.se.debian.org/debian/ lenny main
deb-src http://ftp.se.debian.org/debian/ lenny
deb http://security.debian.org/ lenny/updates m
deb-src http://security.debian.org/ lenny/updat
deb http://volatile.debian.org/debian-volatile
deb-src http://volatile.debian.org/debian-volat
```

Naturally your country code is likely to be different from mine *se*.

Update the packages for Lenny

With a few commands we will make sure that the existing package system is in good shape before the system is up Squeeze.

```
apt-get update
```

Ready for first upgrade:

```
apt-get upgrade
```

Follow this with:

```
apt-get dist-upgrade
```

Check that no packages are on hold or in any half installed state

The system usually contains many many packages, and before the real upgrade stage we must fix such problem pe

Ensure that we do not have any packages on hold with:

```
dpkg --audit
dpkg --get-selections | grep hold
```

No packages can be on hold.

For the final go ahead test use:

```
aptitude
```

Press *g* and the list shows which packages need your attention. Fix any packages in the action list, until the message

No packages are scheduled to be installed, removed or upgraded

Only then you are done and ready to pass this point.

Update the source list for Squeeze

Update once more the `/etc/apt/sources.list`:

```
deb http://ftp.se.debian.org/debian/ squeeze main
deb-src http://ftp.se.debian.org/debian/ squeeze main
deb http://security.debian.org/ squeeze/updates
deb-src http://security.debian.org/ squeeze/updates
```

and at the command line type:

```
apt-get update
```

Squeeze upgrade in two careful steps

It's recommended to use a two stage upgrade approach with *kernel*, *udev* and the preparation for *grub2*. After that completed the full distribution upgrade is performed. Start with the upgrade like so:

```
apt-get upgrade
```

Now to the *kernel*; we need to find your flavor, i.e. the exact version numbers and architecture and install it with:

```
uname -r
apt-get install linux-image-2.6.26-2-amd64
```

If the system is old like my laptop it would install with:

```
apt-get install linux-image-2.6.26-2-686
```

Prepare *grub2* and *udev* for the new system:

```
update-grub
apt-get install udev
```

Once previous steps have completed, it's time to restart the system:

```
reboot
```

Almost there

When the system has restarted, continue with the full upgrade phase, download and upgrade:

```
apt-get -d dist-upgrade
```

```
apt-get dist-upgrade
```

The latter will be interactive. Starting the system with the first menu item shows if *grub2* works properly, if so run:

```
upgrade-from-grub-legacy
```

which will install *grub2* in the Master Boot Record (MBR) on the disk.

Further information are found on Debian main site and in the Release Notes here

<http://www.debian.org/releases/stable/releasenotes>



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Thanks!

Submitted by Karel (not registered) on Mon, 2012-05-07 10:45.

I used your HOWTO up to the point to upgrade from Lenny to Squeeze on my cca 8 year old Toshiba Satellite and it worked a remember it was similar to upgrade from Etch to Lenny, but that time I had a lot of pain to set up correctly my screen resolut everything is fine and even sound and pictures work better than in Lenny. Thank you!

[reply](#) |

[lenny repositories moved to http://archive.debian.org](http://archive.debian.org)

Submitted by mr88talent (not registered) on Sat, 2012-04-28 23:11.

```
deb http://archive.debian.org/debian-archive/debian/ lenny main contrib non-free
deb-src http://archive.debian.org/debian-archive/debian/ lenny main contrib non-free
deb http://archive.debian.org/debian-archive/debian-security/ lenny/updates main contrib non-free
deb-src http://archive.debian.org/debian-archive/debian-security/ lenny/updates main contrib non-free
deb http://archive.debian.org/debian-archive/debian-volatile lenny/volatile main
deb-src http://archive.debian.org/debian-archive/debian-volatile lenny/volatile main
```

[reply](#) | [|](#)

[I want to thank you for the](#)

Submitted by Bk (not registered) on Tue, 2012-04-24 17:40.

I want to thank you for the awesome job you did putting this together! Yes as some have said you left out lots of information have been helpful, if things went south. But on the other hand you provided enough information to perform a successful upgr

I am an IT pro, but only use Linux on my home system. So I'm nowhere near as proficient as I would like. I am constantly fi I run into a problem, look for assistance online, and find the "any dummy would know how to..." responses, but with no helpf Linux moves fast, and "how to" books are outdated very quickly. So I appreciated your no-nonsense "how to" guide.

Fwiw I am just about finished performing a remote (ssh) upgrade of my home system. Base system upgrade went well (I foll your precautions), rebooted, and am now in the "Full Upgrade" phase.

-bk

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[Make sure you update your kernel in Lenny first](#)

Submitted by Anonymous (not registered) on Tue, 2011-05-17 11:20.

If you may be running a slightly out-of-date kernel you **will** need to update the kernel first in Lenny prior to this upgrade to will fail otherwise with broken sub-process'. Also make sure you have your firmware drivers in /lib/firmware if nonfree. You sh warnings for missing firmware after the squeeze kernel upgrade. I had issues with Broadcom network drivers and if I restarte the whole upgrade up in smoke for a while... J.

[reply](#) | [|](#)

[You got an error in there.](#)

Submitted by Anonymous (not registered) on Tue, 2011-04-05 01:01.

You got an error in there. The file is not named

```
/etc/apt/source.list
```

but

```
/etc/apt/sources.list.
```

[reply](#) | [|](#)

[Re: You got an error in there.](#)

Submitted by rduke15 (not registered) on Sat, 2011-04-16 21:44.

If yours is indeed named `"/etc/apt/sources.list."`, then you better rename it to remove the trailing dot...

[reply](#) | [|](#)

Re: Re: You got an error in there.

Submitted by Loïc Jaouen (not registered) on Fri, 2011-12-09 21:38.

The question is on the 's', not the trailing '.'

`/etc/apt/sources.list`

[reply](#) | |

The kernel install command is wrong

Submitted by Ronny Långstrand (not registered) on Fri, 2011-03-04 16:19.

The guide describes how to install the old debian lenny kernel but debian release notes describes it differently (and actually in squeeze kernel 2.6.32-5). It should be: `apt-get install linux-image-2.6-variant` where variant is the processor your laptop it should have been: `apt-get install linux-image-2.6-686`

[reply](#) | |

Read the Release Notes, anyway

Submitted by Anonymous (not registered) on Wed, 2011-02-09 22:44.

What is this article for when there are such nice official Release Notes including the procedure described here and much more to be aware of!

<http://www.debian.org/releases/stable/releasenotes>

[reply](#) | |

Why no mention of the official release notes?

Submitted by Karl o. Pinc (not registered) on Wed, 2011-02-09 21:14.

The official [release notes](#) are where Debian publishes its upgrade instructions. Publishing an abbreviated version is fine, but what of the release notes? They contain much information as to how to avoid problems up-front and what to do about problems should they arise.

[reply](#) | |

Little upgrade tip

Submitted by Anonymous (not registered) on Tue, 2011-02-08 20:38.

I have found that it works best, after you change the sources list and do the update, to run `"apt-get dist-upgrade -d"` to make sure you have all of the packages locally before installing anything. It really helps if a couple of things don't play well together, and break network halfway through, just to fix it at the end (like the network scripts being incompatible with the kernel.)

[reply](#) | |

Re: Little upgrade tip

Submitted by [Debinix](#) (registered user) on Fri, 2011-02-11 02:14.

Thanks for the tip.

[reply](#) | |

squeeze update

Submitted by [jdkullmann](#) (registered user) on Mon, 2011-02-07 20:40.

Having followed your Perfect setup for etch including changing postfix to use mysql for everything and then upgrading to lenny, I had to leave postfix in its held state for the fixes.

This upgrade says 'nothing can be held'. I hope I can still leave postfix held or my mail system will no longer work.

[reply](#) | |

[Debian updates do not change config files](#)

Submitted by Karl O. Pinc (not registered) on Wed, 2011-02-09 21:26.

When Debian upgrades it does not automatically change any configuration files that have been manually changed. You are given the option to install the new config files, keep the old, or have various options for resolving the differences. Or you can go back to the differences after upgrade. So upgrading will not "break your email system".

If you do not upgrade postfix you should not upgrade the rest of your system. All the packages in a release are designed together. Mixing packages from various releases is a recipe for a broken system.

(Likewise, adding non-Debian software to a Debian system puts you in a position of being your own system's integrator. It can break, especially on upgrade, and you'll need to be able to fix it. One of the reasons we integrated hardware and software for the Debian team is to let the Debian team make sure that your software works together. Those unfamiliar with Debian often do not know that software for Debian stable that is not available in the default install, but that is [easily enabled](#).)

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