



Linux Ubuntu 26.04 Manual Pages on command 'mtrace.3'

\$ man mtrace.3

mtrace(3) Library Functions Manual mtrace(3)

NAME

mtrace, muntrace - malloc tracing

LIBRARY

Standard C library (libc, -lc)

SYNOPSIS

```
#include <mcheck.h>
```

```
void mtrace(void);
```

```
void muntrace(void);
```

DESCRIPTION

The `mtrace()` function installs hook functions for the memory-allocation functions (`malloc(3)`, `realloc(3)`, `memalign(3)`, `free(3)`). These hook functions record tracing information about memory allocation and deallocation. The tracing information can be used to discover memory leaks and attempts to free nonallocated memory in a program.

The `muntrace()` function disables the hook functions installed by `mtrace()`, so that tracing information is no longer recorded for the memory-allocation functions. If no hook functions were successfully installed by `mtrace()`, `muntrace()` does nothing.

When `mtrace()` is called, it checks the value of the environment variable `MALLOC_TRACE`, which should contain the pathname of a file in which the tracing information is to be recorded.

If the pathname is successfully opened, it is truncated to zero length.

If `MALLOC_TRACE` is not set, or the pathname it specifies is invalid or not writable, then no hook functions are installed, and `mtrace()` has no effect. In set-user-ID and set-group-ID programs, `MALLOC_TRACE` is ignored, and `mtrace()` has no effect.

ATTRIBUTES

For an explanation of the terms used in this section, see `attributes(7)`.

[illegible]

?	Interface	?	Attribute	?	Value	?
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[illegible]

? mtrace(), muntrace() ? Thread safety ? MT-Unsafe ?

[illegible]

STANDARDS

GNU.

NOTES

In normal usage, `mtrace()` is called once at the start of execution of a program, and `muntrace()` is never called.

The tracing output produced after a call to `mtrace()` is textual, but not designed to be human readable. The GNU C library provides a Perl script, `mtrace(1)`, that interprets the trace log and produces human-readable output. For best results, the traced program should be compiled with debugging enabled, so that line-number information is recorded in the executable.

The tracing performed by `mtrace()` incurs a performance penalty (if `MALLOC_TRACE` points to a valid, writable pathname).

BUGS

The line-number information produced by `mtrace(1)` is not always precise: the line number references may refer to the previous or following (nonblank) line of the source code.

EXAMPLES

The shell session below demonstrates the use of the `mtrace()` function and the `mtrace(1)` command in a program that has memory leaks at two different locations. The demonstration uses the following program:

```
$ cat t_mtrace.c
#include <mcheck.h>
#include <stdio.h>
#include <stdlib.h>

int

main(void)

{
```

```

mtrace();

for (unsigned int j = 0; j < 2; j++)
    malloc(100);      /* Never freed--a memory leak */
    calloc(16, 16);   /* Never freed--a memory leak */

exit(EXIT_SUCCESS);
}

```

When we run the program as follows, we see that mtrace() diagnosed memory leaks at two different locations in the program:

```

$ cc -g t_mtrace.c -o t_mtrace
$ export MALLOC_TRACE=/tmp/t
$ ./t_mtrace
$ mtrace ./t_mtrace $MALLOC_TRACE

```

Memory not freed:

```

-----
Address  Size  Caller
0x084c9378  0x64  at /home/cecilia/t_mtrace.c:12
0x084c93e0  0x64  at /home/cecilia/t_mtrace.c:12
0x084c9448  0x100 at /home/cecilia/t_mtrace.c:16

```

The first two messages about unfreed memory correspond to the two malloc(3) calls inside the for loop. The final message corresponds to the call to calloc(3) (which in turn calls malloc(3)).

SEE ALSO

mtrace(1), malloc(3), malloc_hook(3), mcheck(3)

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