

how to use mutt in ubuntu for reading mail from mbox files

To read mail from an mbox file on Ubuntu using **Mutt**, you can pass the file path directly to the `mutt` command using the `-f` flag. Since Mutt natively autodetects the mbox format, you do not need to configure an email server or complex configuration files to read a local mbox archive. [1, 2]

1. Install Mutt

Ensure Mutt is installed on your Ubuntu system using the Advanced Package Tool (APT): [1]

bash

```
sudo apt update && sudo apt install mutt
```

Use code with caution.

2. Open the mbox File

Launch Mutt and point it directly to your target `.mbox` file: [1]

bash

```
mutt -f /path/to/your/file.mbox
```

Use code with caution.

- **Tip:** If you only want to view the messages without risk of accidental changes or deletions, open it in read-only mode using the `-R` flag:

bash

```
mutt -R -f /path/to/your/file.mbox
```

Use code with caution.

■
[\[1, 2, 3\]](#)

3. Essential Navigation Keyboard Shortcuts

Once Mutt loads the interactive terminal interface, use these standard shortcuts to browse the archive: [\[1, 2\]](#)

- `?` / `?` (or `k` / `j`): Scroll through the message index list.
- `Enter` (or `Space`): Open and read the highlighted email.
- `i`: Exit the email body view and return to the main index list.
- `d`: Mark an email for deletion (only applies if you didn't use the read-only flag).
- `c`: Change to a different folder or switch to another mbox file without closing Mutt.
- `q`: Quit Mutt. [\[1, 2, 3, 4\]](#)

4. Optional Configuration (Fixing HTML emails)

Many modern mbox files contain HTML formatting that looks cluttered in a plain-text terminal. You can make Mutt auto-convert HTML emails to text using an external text browser like `lynx` or `w3m`. [\[1, 2, 3, 4, 5\]](#)

Create or edit your local config file at `~/.muttrc` or `~/.config/mutt/muttrc` and add the following lines: [\[1, 2, 3\]](#)

text

```
auto_view text/html
alternative_order text/plain text/html
```

■
Use code with caution.

■
Ensure your system's global mailcap file (`/etc/mailcap`) has an entry handling `text/html`, which is standard across Ubuntu installations. [\[1\]](#)

If you plan to use this setup frequently, let me know if you would like to **automate sorting** by thread, or if you need help **extracting attachments** from the mbox file

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