

FreeCommander ~ Multi-Rename

Using an organized naming system can make it easier to control your files.

For example, add a prefix to all files that belong to a certain project, add incrementing numbers to track different versions of an evolving document, add MP3 tags so you can finally get all that music categorized.

I grump about file extensions in UPPER case; Multi-rename fixes that easily.

Multi-Rename can add or replace text strings, change case, add incrementing numbers, insert many kinds of information into names (date information, file Summary data, MP3 tags, photo EXIF data).

A supremely useful feature is the ability to create Profiles to save sets of parameters for future use.

Do keep in mind that some renaming operations are too complex to complete in one step. You might have to change parts of names in stages, and run Rename in two or more passes.

Currently, this function doesn't support wildcards, so sometimes you may need to use another utility that can find and replace unspecified text in filenames. (perhaps wildcards will be available in the future.)

But I do think you'll find that Multi-Rename meets your needs most of the time. Try out the features, test different settings to see what they do.

With a bit of practice, you'll soon be getting your file names under control.

The procedures in this guide apply to FreeCommander version 2009-02a.

I hope you find it helpful.

granny _____ oo

15 March, 2010

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■ SELECT FILES TO RENAME ---

With one or more files or folders selected in the File List, go to menu **File > Multi-Rename**. Or use hotkey **CTRL + M**

A few notes about file selections ---

- Multi-Rename can only be called from the File List, not from the Tree.
- With multiple items selected, **F2** or **File > Rename** will also automatically open the Multi-Rename dialog.

TIP--- To quickly load all files from the current folder, click to select Parent Folder "double-dot" symbol at top left of File List (or press **Home** key)
Use **F2** or **File > Rename** to load all files into Multi-Rename.

- In the Multi-Rename window, to expand current list to include subfolder contents, select setting "**With Subdirectories**" on the right panel. Subfolder names and filenames will load.

To exclude the subfolder names leave **With Subdirectories** checked, and check "**Files Only**",

To show only contents of current folder, uncheck **With Subdirectories**.

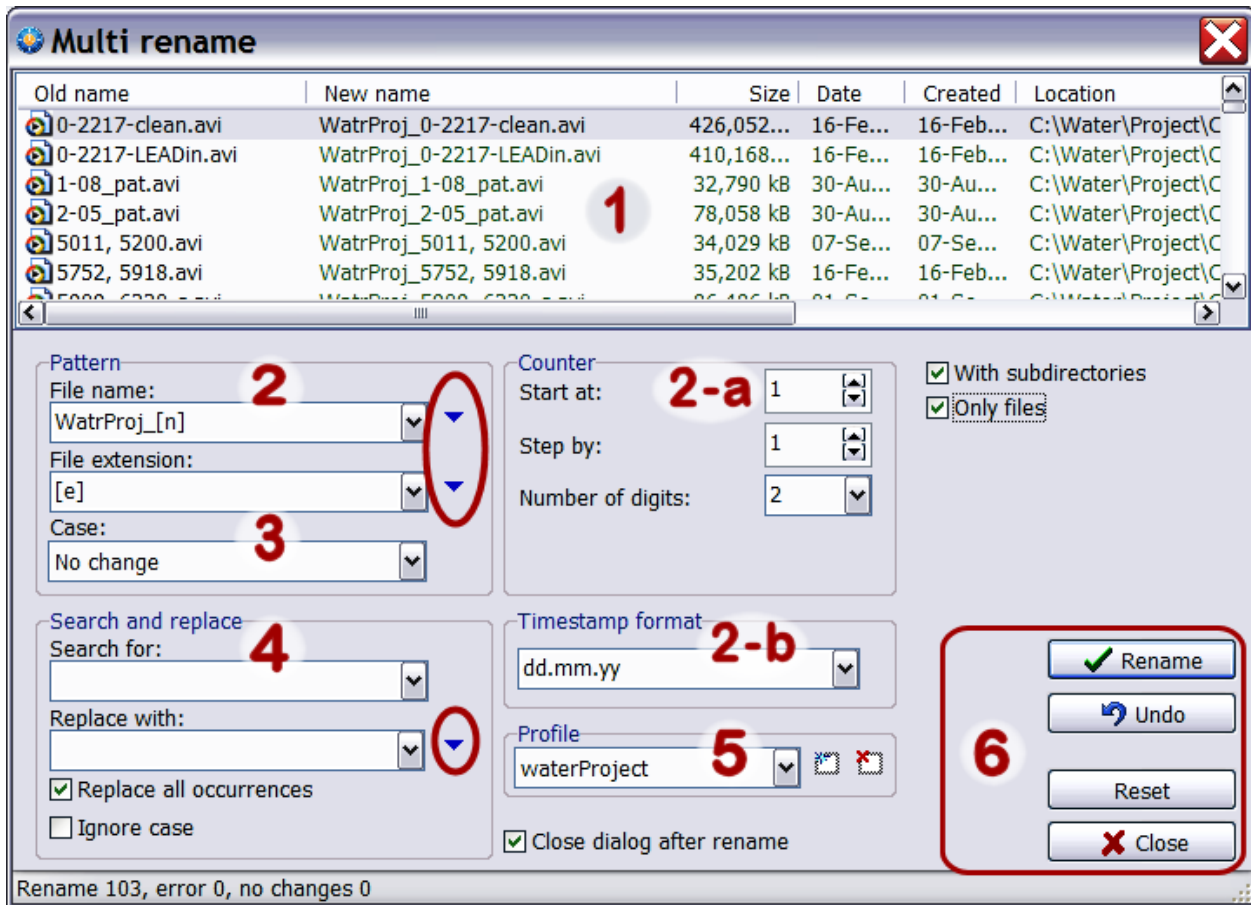
GlitchNote – for above setting - files in subfolders nested **more than two layers deep** will not load if **Files Only** is checked. Confirmed Bug Report

You could leave **Files Only** unchecked, and manually remove folder names from list (use right-click context menu, or press **DELETE** key.)

OR, use Flat View instead ---

1. **CTRL + B** or **View > Flat View -Files**
displays contents of current folder and its subfolders in File List.
2. **CTRL + A** or **Edit > Select All**
3. **CTRL + M** or **File > Multi-Rename**.

Note – When Multi-Rename closes, Flat View is dismissed.



1. **THE LIST WINDOW** displays the original name and the new name, file size, modified date, created date, and folder path.

"New names" update as you enter new parameters. You can view results immediately and adjust settings as needed.

Status bar at bottom displays information for actions performed.

The dialog is resizable. Drag column headings to change width.

■ Right-click an item in the list to display **Context Menu**

This is your bail-out insurance to prevent unwanted changes to specified items. Select an action from the context menu, or use its hotkey.

Activate Viewer ___ display in external window

Lock for Changes ___ lock to **current display**,
block further changes

Edit and Lock ___ name item manually,
block further changes

Remove from List ___ the name keeps any completed rename operation

Properties ___ display Windows File Properties dialog

Activate viewer	F3
Lock for changes	Ctrl+L
Edit and lock...	Shift+Ctrl+L
Remove from the list	Del
Properties	Alt+Enter

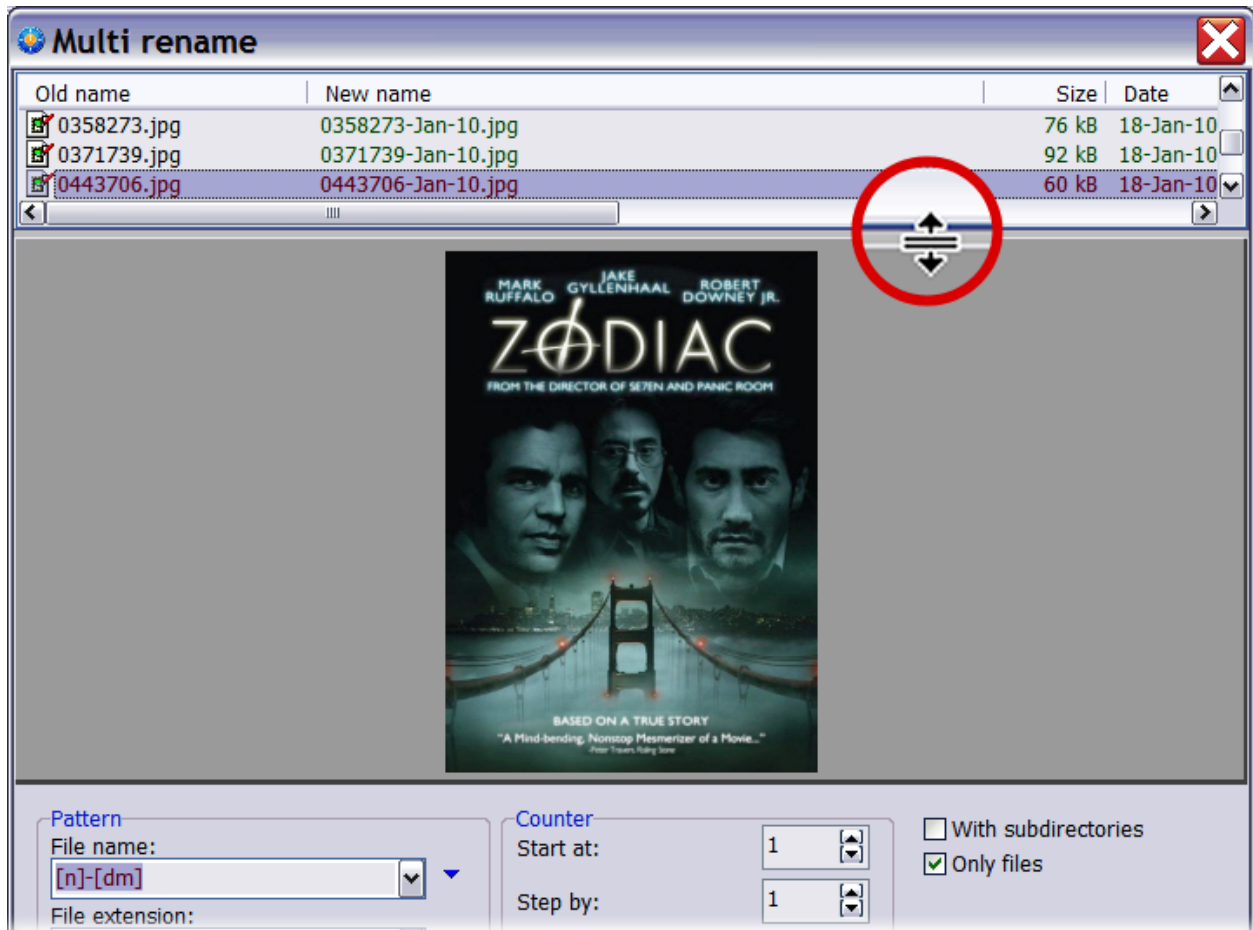
TIP... *A Hidden Command* (it will be our little secret, ok?)

Use **CTRL + Q** to toggle on and off a **Quick-View window** inside the Multi-Rename dialog.

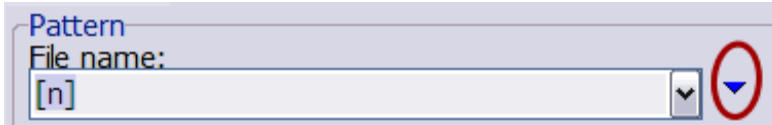
This will display files in formats supported by the integrated viewer, all others will display in Binary.

WLX Lister plugins don't operate in this window.

Drag the top border of the viewer window to re-size it vertically
drag the side borders of the dialog to re-size horizontally.



2. PATTERN --



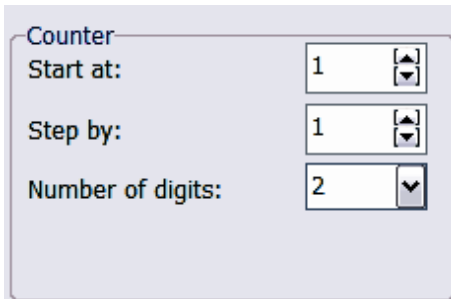
Patterns are expressions that represent text strings. (think of them as named variables)

Use patterns to keep, discard, replace, and/or append text in file names

Click ▼ blue arrows to select from drop-down menu of available patterns. You can :

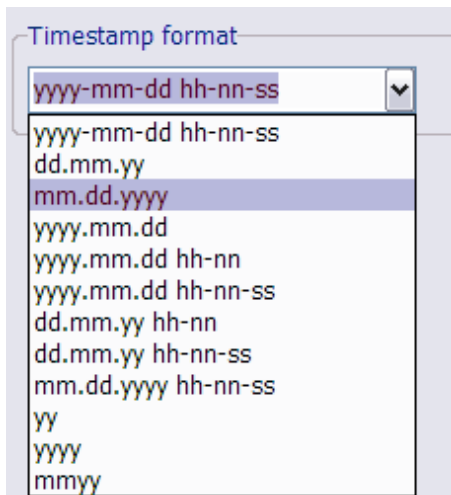
- use characters from file Name, file Extension, and/or containing Folder.
- use "Counter" to include an incrementing number sequence.
- include date information, for current date, file creation date, file modified date
- include information strings from Summary, MP3, and EXIF lists

<u>N</u> ame	[n]
N <u>a</u> me from x	[n,x]
N <u>a</u> me from x to y	[n,x,y]
<u>E</u> xtension	[e]
E <u>x</u> tension from x	[e,x]
E <u>x</u> tension from x to y	[e,x,y]
<u>F</u> older	[p]
F <u>o</u> lder from x	[p,x]
F <u>o</u> lder from x to y	[p,x,y]
<u>C</u> ounter	[c]
<u>D</u> ate - current	[d]
D <u>a</u> te - created	[dc]
D <u>a</u> te - modified	[dm]
<u>S</u> ummary info	▶
MP3	▶
P <u>i</u> cture - EXIF	▶



2-a Counter

configure number sequence — beginning number, size of steps, number of digits to use. Accept default settings, type in numbers, or use spinner arrows to increment



2-b Timestamp format

accept default "Windows" format, type in your own preferred format, or select a format from drop-down list.

- Enter pattern choices in the **File Name** field to change names.
Likewise, use the **File Extension** field to change the extension.
(In many cases, you'll probably simply type a new extension.)

- Pattern expressions are enclosed by square brackets [] and will be replaced by their corresponding characters.

e.g. **[n]** is equivalent to all the characters in the name
[n5] is equivalent to the first five characters in the name
[n,3] is equivalent to the characters starting with the third.

Note that **negative numbers** count back from the right end of string
 Use negative numbers when filenames have varying lengths,
 and you want to work with characters at the end of the name.

See below for some [pattern examples](#).

- Text without brackets will be inserted unchanged.

If you want to add other characters not derived from the patterns,
 simply type them into the sequence, e.g. **[n12]TopPick[n,13]**

Be sure not to type inside the pattern brackets.

If you want to use square brackets in filenames, in combination with
 patterns, please [see here](#).

- When you choose from pattern menu, expressions for Name, Extension,
 and Folder are entered into the text field with default settings of **1**.
 Replace with the desired numbers.

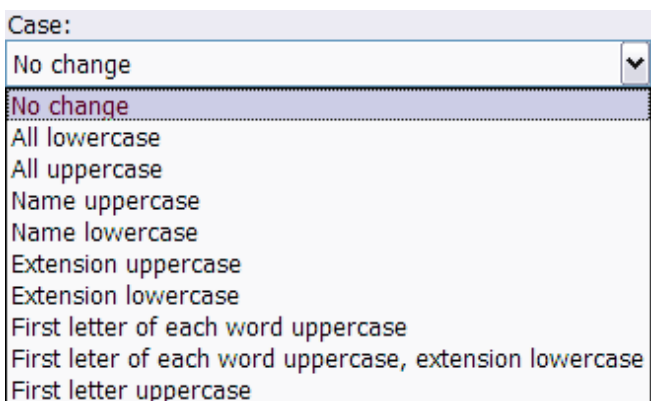
TIP--- If you will use a Counter incrementing number, first click a column
 heading to sort the list in the order you want numbers applied (by
 name, by date). Then apply **[c]** Counter pattern in the text field.

Numbers stay assigned to those names even if you change the sort.
 To change number assignments to a new sort order, clear **[c]** pattern
 from the text field,, and then enter it again.

3. **CASE** ---

Select from the drop-down list
 to choose a configuration,
 or No Change.

If your desired combination isn't
 listed, you can run rename twice
 (you should [Reset](#) in between).



4. SEARCH AND REPLACE ---

- Enter one or more text strings to **Search For**
- Enter one or more text strings to **Replace With**
 - Type a string and/or choose pattern expressions from drop-down menu (click the ▼ blue arrow.)
GlitchNote —*Date Created* and *Date Modified* are broken here.
 - Leave *Replace* field empty to "erase" matched strings.

- You can search and replace **multiple strings** by adding the **pipe** symbol “|” between the texts.

Example from help file: (see below for [more pipes examples](#))

Search For scattered vowels in the name by using this string:

a|e|i|o|u

Replace With CAPS by using this string:

A|E|I|O|U

favourites.doc becomes fAvOUrItEs.dOc

- **Replace All Occurrences** applies to strings with and without pipes. If it is checked, all occurrences matching the search string are replaced. If it is not checked, only the first occurrence is replaced.
- If **Ignore Case** is checked, characters that match search string will be replaced, regardless of their case. If it is not checked, the search string case must be matched exactly.

5. PROFILE ---

- You can save sets of parameters in Profiles, to be used again.
Click the icon next to the profile field **Save new profile**
Enter a name in the input box.
To delete a profile, select it from the list, click icon **Delete profile**
You cannot re-name or re-configure an existing profile in the dialog. (but you can manually edit the INI file.)
- On a related note, FC keeps a history of the ten most recent patterns and text strings which you have configured.
Click drop-down list arrows to select from the history lists for *File Name*, *File Extension*, *Search For*, and *Replace With* fields.

6. THE COMMANDS ---

— **Rename**

The listed items will be renamed when you click *Rename* button, except for any you have [Locked](#).

If the option **Close dialog after rename** is checked, the window closes automatically if all the files have been renamed.

Items that can't be renamed are shown in red.

The most common causes for rename to fail ---

- the file is being used by another program
- another file already exists with that name in that location
- name contains "illegal" characters \ / : * ? " < > | (see [a fix here](#))

NOTE – (unlike nagging Windows Explorer) read-only files are renamed without a question, file extensions changed without a quibble.

It's a breath of fresh air. But do be careful not to break your files.

— **Undo**

You can undo the last renaming operation.

If rename has just completed, and the Undo button is not active, you must close and re-open Multi-Rename to activate Undo. (you can use any file).

Click **Undo**, click **YES** on the confirmation dialog, then **OK** on the completion message. Files are renamed in reverse order, last file first.

Don't panic when the dialog list doesn't show the recovered names, it simply doesn't update for an undo operation.

— **Reset**

.*Reset* restores the initial default settings in all the text fields, including Counter and Timestamp format.

GlitchNote – if a **Profile** is in effect, timestamp format is NOT reset.

You may find it helpful to use *Reset* between passes when you must change names in stages. Or any time you want a clean slate

Don't worry, Profiles and History lists remain unchanged.

— **Close**

All your current settings are stored when the dialog is closed, and will be in place the next time you run Multi-Rename.

■ **Patterns and Pipes** can be a bit daunting at first, especially if you are only accustomed to using * and ? wildcards to work with text strings.

Try the examples for practice, then create some settings of your own.

These are some pattern examples I snatched from the French Help file, thank you BabelFish. (it's not plagiarism, it's research !)

FreeCommander	[n]	FreeCommander	All characters
FreeCommander	[n5]	FreeC	First 5 characters
FreeCommander	[n-4]	nder	Last 4 characters
FreeCommander	[n, 5]	Commander	All characters starting with fifth
FreeCommander	[n, 2, 6]	reeCom	6 characters starting with second
FreeCommander	[n, -3, 5]	mmand	5 characters ending third from the end

This inserts a Counter incrementing number and a tilde to beginning of name.

Dog.avi, Cat.avi	[c]~[n]	01~Dog.avi, 02~Cat.avi
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This adds some MP3 tags to the name.

Siciliana.mp3	[mp3artist]~[n]~[mp3comment]
Bach~Siciliana~Sonata#1031.mp3	

This inserts a "manual" prefix to the name, adds a dash and date modified (*TimeStamp Format* mmyy), and changes file extension.

park.pspimage, lake.pspimage	<i>Name</i> Kids-[n]-[dm]	Kids-park-1109.psp
	<i>Extension</i> [e3] OR psp	Kids-lake-0809.psp

Use a pattern like this one to replace character(s) at a specified location.

This example keeps the first three characters, inserts letter F, then keeps the remaining characters from character 5 onwards.

510R-sumry.xls	[n3] F [n, 5]	510 F -sumry.xls, 511 F -sales.xls
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You can use negative numbers to work with the end of the name. This one keeps all characters ending with ninth from the end, skips 3, keeps the last 5.

Joe-11.01.10.odt	[n, -9][n-5]	Joe-01.10.odt, Billy-11.09.odt
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This **Pipes** example corrects mis-spelled words (and changes case).

Search for	teh lrod rings	Replace with	The Lord Rings
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This one replaces abbreviations with full words.

Search for	sumry rpt	Replace with	Summary Report
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This one replaces "rpt" with two patterns, and erases the other string

Search for	rpt prelim usg	Replace with	[p12]-[d]
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How to add square brackets [] around a pattern.

Brackets typed between patterns double up in filename, and break the pattern.

In *File Name*, enter desired patterns. Insert parentheses (or two other characters not existing in file names) where you will want brackets.

Name	[n]([c])	CoolFile(06).jpg
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In *Search & Replace*, replace parentheses with brackets

Search for	()	Replace with	[]
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Here is the final result.

CoolFile[06].jpg

How to replace "illegal" filename characters < > : \ / * ? | from MP3 tags.

Set *File Name* patterns for MP3 tags, then use Search & Replace strings similar to these. (use replacement characters that you prefer, of course.)

Note – If tags include pipe symbols, those must be edited manually.

Search for	< > : \ /* ?	Replace with	- - ~ _ _ # x
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Workarounds for Folder Names that use "dot" separators

e.g. UFO.Sightings.1989, UFO.AbuDUCTIONS.1992, UFO.AbuHELLPPP
FC interprets the final segment as a file extension.

— If you want to keep the dots, and want to edit characters in that final segment, you can use the *Extension* field to manipulate it.

— If you want to change dot separators (to tildes, for example), Search & Replace will fail on the final dot. So you must get rid of the "extension" and append those characters to the "name". Be sure to insert the new separator.

Name	[n]~[e]	Extension	field must be empty
Search for	·	Replace with	~