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WinSCP Free SFTP, SCP and FTP client for Windows

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How do I change user after login (e.g. su root)?

None of the protocols ([SFTP](#), [FTP](#) and [SCP](#)) supported by WinSCP allow the user to be changed in the middle of file transfer session. You need to start the session with the correct user.

Direct Login

Easiest way is to allow direct login with the user account you need, if it is not allowed already. For accounts such as `root`, the direct login is typically disabled by default for security reasons. So when enabling it, have security in mind.

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Particularly with [SSH](#), you may want to keep password authentication (the most vulnerable one) disabled and use e.g. [public key authentication](#) instead. With OpenSSH server, you can do that by setting `sshd_config` [http://man.openbsd.org/sshd_config] keyword `PermitRootLogin` to `without-password`¹⁾.

Use sudo on Login

In some cases (with Unix/Linux server) you may be able to use `sudo` [<https://linux.die.net/man/8/sudo>] command straight after login to change a user, before file transfer session starts.

[FTP](#) protocol does not allow this.

The [SFTP](#) and [SCP](#) protocols allow for this, but the actual method is platform dependent.

With [SFTP](#) protocol, you can use [SFTP server](#) option on [SFTP page](#) of Advanced Site Settings dialog to execute [SFTP](#) binary under a different user. With OpenSSH server, you can specify:

```
sudo /bin/sftp-server
```

Note that [SFTP](#) server binary may be located elsewhere²⁾ (e.g. in `/usr/lib/sftp-server`, `/usr/lib/openssh/sftp-server` or `/usr/libexec/openssh/sftp-server`).

With [SCP](#) protocol, you can specify following command as custom shell on the [SCP/Shell page](#) of Advanced Site Settings dialog:

```
sudo -s
```

However you will not be able to provide a password for `su` (see [remote command execution limitations](#)). So you may be able to do the above only if you are allowed to do `sudo su` without being prompted with password. See [sudo](#) [<https://linux.die.net/man/8/sudo>] documentation to learn how to do that. For example you can add following line to [sudoers](#) [<https://linux.die.net/man/5/sudoers>] file (`/etc/sudoers`):

```
yourusername ALL=NOPASSWD: ALL
```

The above line is very permissive, it allows user `yourusername` connected from anywhere (the first `ALL`) to run any command (the second `ALL`) as a `root` without being asked for password. So you should restrict it as much as possible.

For example with OpenSSH you may restrict it only to [SFTP](#) session by:

```
yourusername ALL=NOPASSWD: /bin/sftp-server
```

Note that as WinSCP cannot implement terminal emulation, you need to have `sudoers` option `requiretty` turned off (what is default).

- 1) Even more restrictive option `forced-commands-only` may work with `SFTP` protocol, but it has not been tested.
- 2) You can see path to `SFTP` binary in Subsystem `sftp` clause in `/etc/ssh/sshd_config`, unless keyword `internal-sftp` is used instead of a path.

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