

Can someone explain why the “Fix in R” command is giving me the error message “invalid (do_set) left-hand side to assignment”?

Authored by
stats writer

June 29, 2024

RECOMMENDED CITATION

stats writer (2024). *Can someone explain why the “Fix in R” command is giving me the error message “invalid (do_set) left-hand side to assignment”?*. PSYCHOLOGICAL SCALES.

Retrieved from <https://scales.arabpsychology.com/?p=158258>

The "Fix in R" command is a function that is used in the R programming language to troubleshoot and correct errors in code. However, some users have reported receiving the error message "invalid (do_set) left-hand side to assignment" when attempting to use this command. This error typically occurs when the code being fixed contains an incorrect assignment or reference to a variable. Further investigation and debugging may be necessary to resolve this issue.

Fix in R: invalid (do_set) left-hand side to assignment

One error message you may encounter when using R is:

```
Error in 5 <- read.table("data.txt") :  
invalid (do_set) left-hand side to assignment
```

This error occurs when you attempt to create a variable in R that starts with a number.

By default, R only allows you to define variable names that start with either a character or a dot.

The following example shows how to resolve this error in practice.

How to Reproduce the Error

Suppose I attempt to use the function to read a file into R:

```
#attempt to read text file into R
```

```
5 <- read.table("data.txt")
```

```
Error in 5 <- read.table("data.txt") :
```

```
invalid (do_set) left-hand side to assignment
```

I receive an error because I attempted to create a variable name that started with a number.

How to Avoid the Error

To avoid the error, I must use a variable name that starts with a character or a dot.

For example, I could use the following variable name that starts with a character:

```
#read text file into R
```

```
data5 <- read.table("data.txt")
```

```
#view contents of text file
```

```
data5
```

```
V1 V2
```

```
1 1 4
```

```
2 3 4
```

3 2 5

4 7 9

5 9 1

6 6 3

7 4 4

Or I could even use the following variable name that starts with a dot:

#read text file into R

.data5 <- read.table("data.txt")

#view contents of text file

.data5

V1 V2

1 1 4

2 3 4

3 2 5

4 7 9

5 9 1

6 6 3

7 4 4

Once again I don't receive an error because I didn't start

the variable name with a character.

Note that you can type the following into R to read the complete documentation on how to create syntactically valid names:

?make.names

Additional Resources

The following tutorials explain how to fix other common errors in R:

ARABPSYCHOLOGY.COM