

# Can you use a wildcard in the FILTER function in Excel?

Authored by  
**stats writer**

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## RECOMMENDED CITATION

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The FILTER function in Excel allows users to retrieve specific data from a given set of criteria. It is commonly used to filter data based on a single condition. However, it is not possible to use a wildcard in the FILTER function. Wildcards are symbols used to represent one or more characters in a search term. While Excel offers various functions to use wildcards, the FILTER function does not support it. This limitation means that users cannot use wildcards to filter data in Excel using the FILTER function.

## Excel: Use Wildcard in FILTER Function

**You can use the following syntax to use wildcard characters within a FILTER function in Excel:**

```
=FILTER(A2:B12, ISNUMBER(SEARCH("some_string", A2:A12)), "None")
```

**This particular formula will filter the rows in the range A2:B12 where the cells in the range A2:A12 contain "some\_string" anywhere in the cell.**

**If no cell contains "some\_string" then the formula will simply return the output "None."**

**The following example shows how to use this syntax in practice.**

**Example: Use Wildcard in FILTER Function in Excel**

**Suppose we have the following dataset in Excel that**

**contains information about various basketball teams:**

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	<b>Team</b>	<b>Points</b>				
2	Hawks	99				
3	Mavs	95				
4	Nets	97				
5	Warriors	97				
6	Nuggets	105				
7	Magic	104				
8	Thunder	109				
9	Hornets	100				
10	Pacers	98				
11	Raptors	104				
12	Rockets	100				
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						
21						
22						

**We can use the following formula to filter for the rows where the Team column contains "ets" anywhere in the cell:**

```
=FILTER(A2:B12, ISNUMBER(SEARCH("ets", A2:A12)), "None")
```

**The following screenshot shows how to use this formula in practice:**

D1    fx    =FILTER(A2:B12, ISNUMBER(SEARCH("ets", A2:A12)), "None")

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	<b>Team</b>	<b>Points</b>		Nets	97				
2	Hawks	99		Nuggets	105				
3	Mavs	95		Hornets	100				
4	Nets	97		Rockets	100				
5	Warriors	97							
6	Nuggets	105							
7	Magic	104							
8	Thunder	109							
9	Hornets	100							
10	Pacers	98							
11	Raptors	104							
12	Rockets	100							
13									
14									
15									
16									
17									
18									
19									
20									
21									

We can see that the filter only returns the four rows that contain "ets" somewhere in the Team name:

**NetsNuggetsHornetsRockets**

Note that if we filter using some string that doesn't exist in any Team name, the formula will simply return the output "None."

For example, suppose we attempt to filter for rows where the Team name contains "zzz" somewhere in the

cell:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	<b>Team</b>	<b>Points</b>		None					
2	Hawks	99							
3	Mavs	95							
4	Nets	97							
5	Warriors	97							
6	Nuggets	105							
7	Magic	104							
8	Thunder	109							
9	Hornets	100							
10	Pacers	98							
11	Raptors	104							
12	Rockets	100							
13									
14									
15									
16									
17									
18									
19									
20									
21									
22									

**Note:** The **SEARCH** function in the formula performs a case-insensitive search. If you'd like to perform a case-sensitive search, replace **SEARCH** with **FIND** in the formula.

The following tutorials explain how to perform other common tasks in Excel: