

# Does R have a way to check if a file exists? And can you provide some examples of using this function?

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## RECOMMENDED CITATION

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R has a built-in function called "file.exists()" that allows users to check if a file exists in a particular directory. This function returns a boolean value of TRUE if the file exists and FALSE if it does not. It can be used for various applications such as checking if a data file is present before attempting to load it or verifying if a specific output file has been created. Examples of using this function include:

1. Checking if a file named "data.csv" exists in the current working directory: `file.exists("data.csv")`
2. Verifying if a file named "results.txt" exists in a specific folder: `file.exists("C:/Documents/Results/results.txt")`
3. Using a conditional statement to perform a certain action only if the file exists: `if(file.exists("my_file.pdf")) {print("File found!")} else {print("File does not exist.")}`

## Check if File Exists in R (With Examples)

You can use the following basic syntax to check if a file exists in your current working directory in R:

```
file.exists('my_data.csv')
```

This function will return TRUE if the file exists or FALSE if it does not.

You can also use an if else statement to read a file into R only if it exists:

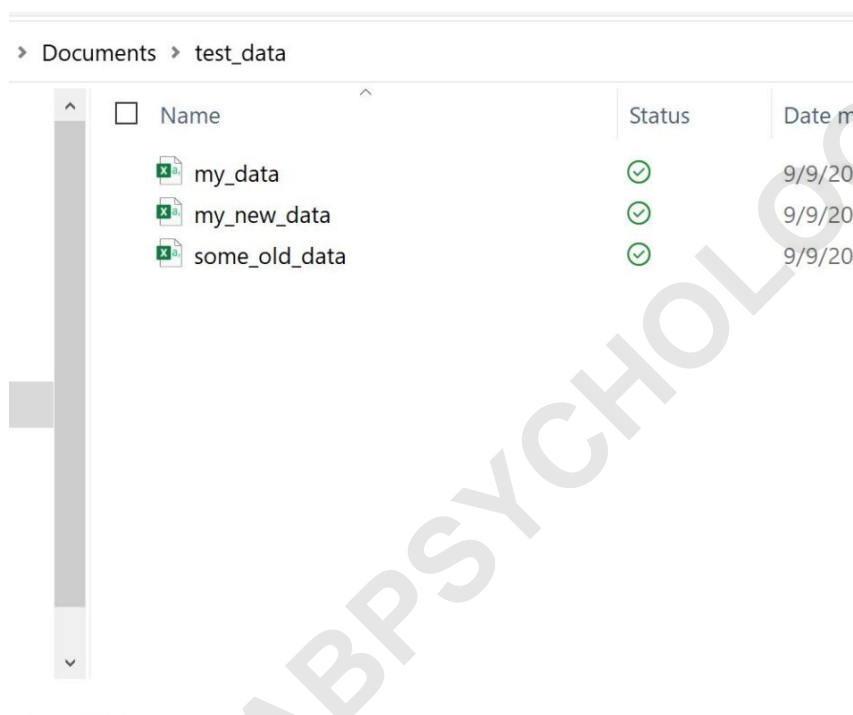
```
data <- 'my_data.csv'
```

```
if(file.exists(data)){ df <- read.csv(data)} else {  
print('Does not exist')}
```

The following example shows how to use these functions in practice.

### Example: Check if File Exists in R

Suppose my current in R is a folder called `test_data` with three CSV files:



The screenshot shows a file explorer window with the path 'Documents > test\_data'. It displays a table of files with columns for Name, Status, and Date modified.

Name	Status	Date modified
my_data	✓	9/9/202
my_new_data	✓	9/9/202
some_old_data	✓	9/9/202

I can use `list.files()` to list out the names of every file in the working directory:

**#display the names of every file in current working directory**

**`list.files()`**

```
"my_data.csv"           "my_new_data.csv"  
"some_old_data.csv"
```

I can use `file.exists()` to check if a given file exists in the current working directory:

```
#check if file 'my_data.csv' exists in current working  
directory  
file.exists('my_data.csv')
```

**TRUE**

The function returns **TRUE**, which tells us that the file 'my\_data.csv' does indeed exist in the current working directory.

We can then use the following if else statement to import a file only if it exists:

```
#define file name  
data <- 'my_data.csv'  
  
#import file only if it exists  
if(file.exists(data)){ df <- read.csv(data)} else {  
print('Does not exist')}
```

## #view contents of CSV file

df

team points assists

1 A 14 4

2 B 26 7

3 C 29 8

4 D 20 3

Since the file exists, we're able to import it successfully.

#define file name

data <- 'this\_data.csv'

#import file only if it exists

```
if(file.exists(data)){ df <- read.csv(data)} else {  
print('Does not exist')}
```

"Does not exist"

We receive the message "Does not exist", which tells us that a file called `this_data.csv` does not exist in the current working directory.