Excel: Find the First Monday of Each Month

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Excel is recognized globally as an incredibly powerful and versatile tool, essential for managing vast amounts of data, performing complex calculations, and optimizing scheduling. One particularly useful and frequently sought-after calculation involves determining the exact date of the **first Monday of each month** within a given dataset. This seemingly specific task requires a precise combination of Excel functions to calculate reliably across different years and months.

While Excel offers direct functions for retrieving basic date components, figuring out the formula for a specific weekday occurrence (like the first Monday) demands an understanding of how **date serial numbers** operate. By leveraging core functions such as the DATE function, the WEEKDAY function, and components like YEAR function and MONTH function, users can generate a robust calculation that automatically tracks these critical dates, significantly streamlining scheduling, event management, and business planning.

The Core Formula for Determining the First Monday

To efficiently determine the first Monday of any given month derived from a date in a specified cell, a specialized formula is required. This formula expertly manipulates the serial number of the date to locate the desired weekday offset within the first week.

The following powerful formula is designed to calculate the first Monday of the month referenced by the date stored in cell **A2**. Understanding the mechanics of this calculation is key to applying it successfully to larger datasets.

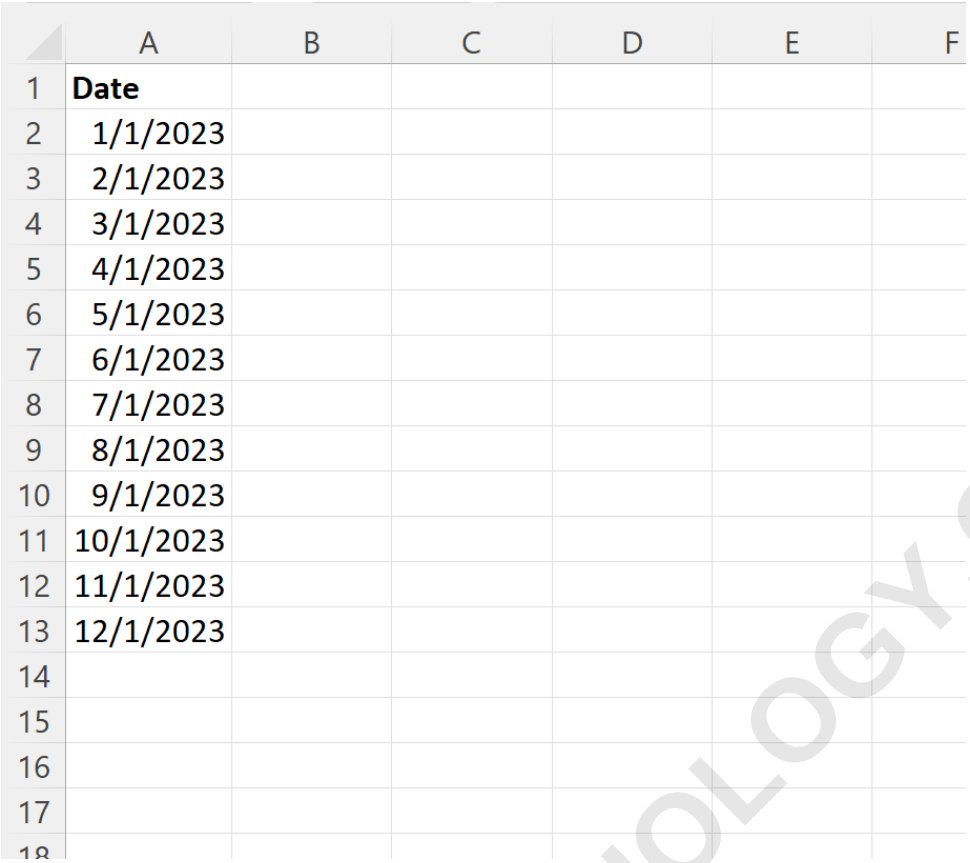
=DATE(YEAR(A2),MONTH(A2),7)-WEEKDAY(DATE(YEAR(A2),MONTH(A2),7),3)

This structure ensures that regardless of the exact day the month begins on, the formula consistently returns the **date serial number** corresponding to the first Monday. In the subsequent sections, we will delve into the practical implementation of this formula and explain the specific role of each component, particularly the return type argument used within the **WEEKDAY function**.

Step-by-Step Practical Application in a Dataset

We can now demonstrate the utility of this formula by applying it to a sample list of dates. Suppose you have a column (Column A) containing various dates, and your objective is to populate Column B with the corresponding first Monday of the month for each row.

Consider the following hypothetical dataset in Excel, where Column A contains the input dates:



	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	**Date**					
2	1/1/2023					
3	2/1/2023					
4	3/1/2023					
5	4/1/2023					
6	5/1/2023					
7	6/1/2023					
8	7/1/2023					
9	8/1/2023					
10	9/1/2023					
11	10/1/2023					
12	11/1/2023					
13	12/1/2023					
14						
15						
16						
17						

To begin the calculation, we enter the core formula into cell **B2**. This cell will calculate the first Monday corresponding to the date found in **A2** (1/1/2023). The formula remains identical to the one presented previously, targeting the reference cell **A2**:

=DATE(YEAR(A2),MONTH(A2),7)-WEEKDAY(DATE(YEAR(A2),MONTH(A2),7),3)

Visualizing and Validating the Results

Once the formula is entered into cell B2, we can utilize Excel's powerful drag-and-fill functionality. By clicking and dragging the formula handle down the remaining cells in Column B, we apply the calculation to every date in Column A, producing the desired list of first Mondays.

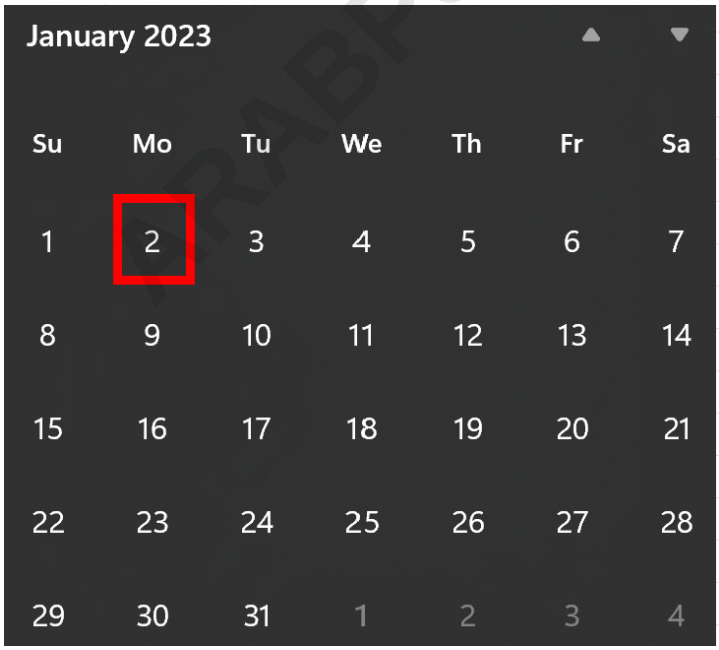
The resulting table demonstrates the accuracy of the calculation:

B2 =DATE(YEAR(A2),MONTH(A2),7)-WEEKDAY(DATE(YEAR(A2),MONTH(A2),7),3)

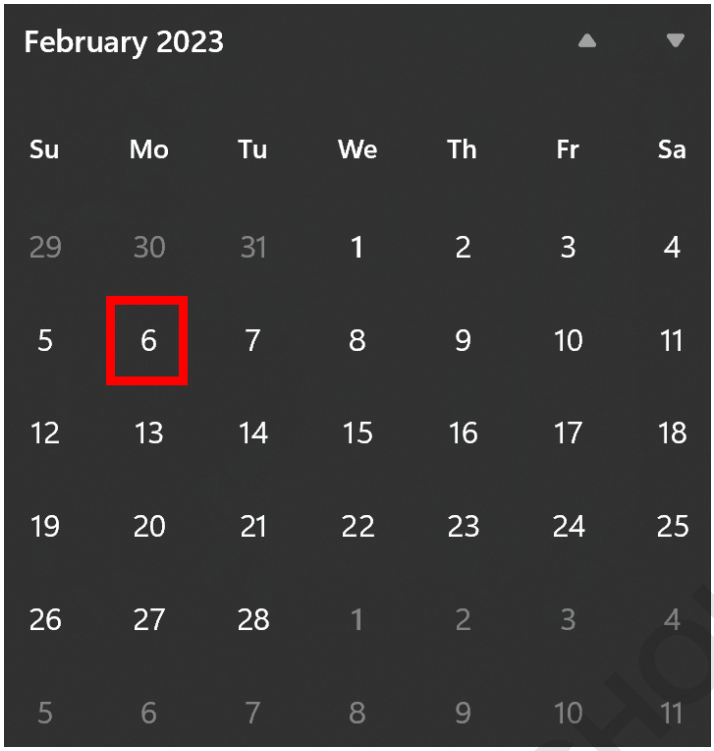
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	**Date**	**First Monday**							
2	1/1/2023	1/2/2023							
3	2/1/2023	2/6/2023							
4	3/1/2023	3/6/2023							
5	4/1/2023	4/3/2023							
6	5/1/2023	5/1/2023							
7	6/1/2023	6/5/2023							
8	7/1/2023	7/3/2023							
9	8/1/2023	8/7/2023							
10	9/1/2023	9/4/2023							
11	10/1/2023	10/2/2023							
12	11/1/2023	11/6/2023							
13	12/1/2023	12/4/2023							
14									
15									

Column B is now populated with the date of the first Monday for the month represented in its corresponding cell in Column A. It is vital to validate these results to ensure the formula is working correctly across different starting points. For instance, considering the first date of **1/1/2023** (January 2023), the formula returns **1/2/2023**.

By consulting a standard calendar for January 2023, we can confirm that January 1st was a Sunday, making **January 2nd** the actual first Monday of that month:



We can perform a similar check for the second input date, **2/1/2023** (February 2023). The formula correctly calculates the first Monday as **2/6/2023**. A quick reference to the calendar confirms this finding, proving the formula's reliability:



Deconstructing the Formula's Logic

To fully appreciate the efficiency of this calculation, let us revisit the structure of the formula used and break down its operational logic step-by-step. We will analyze the calculation based on the input date 1/1/2023 (cell A2):

=DATE(YEAR(A2),MONTH(A2),7)-WEEKDAY(DATE(YEAR(A2),MONTH(A2),7),3)

The central concept here involves identifying a known, safe day within the first week of the month and then calculating the offset required to retreat to the preceding Monday. The formula first establishes the date of the 7th day of the target month. This is achieved using the DATE function combined with the YEAR function and MONTH function. For the input 1/1/2023, this initial calculation returns the date **1/7/2023**. By choosing the 7th, we guarantee that this date will always fall within the first week of the target month, ensuring a valid starting point for finding the first Monday.

Understanding the WEEKDAY Function's Return Type

The second half of the formula calculates the numerical offset needed: `WEEKDAY(DATE(YEAR(A2),MONTH(A2),7),3)`. This segment utilizes the WEEKDAY function, which is crucial for determining the position of the 7th day relative to Monday. Critically, we employ the optional argument **3**, which dictates the type of return value.

When the type argument is set to **3**, the **WEEKDAY function** assigns numeric values starting with 0 for Monday and ending with 6 for Sunday. This zero-based system simplifies the calculation immensely because the resulting number corresponds exactly to the number of days that must be subtracted from the 7th of the month to arrive at the preceding Monday.

Since 1/7/2023 is a Saturday, the **WEEKDAY function** with the return type 3 yields the number **5** (Monday=0, Tuesday=1, Wednesday=2, Thursday=3, Friday=4, Saturday=5, Sunday=6).

Conclusion and Further Resources

The final step involves subtracting the calculated weekday number (the offset) from the 7th day of the month. In our example, we subtract 5 days from 1/7/2023 (the date serial number for January 7th).

The subtraction calculation is: 1/7/2023 - 5 days, which results in **1/2/2023**. This elegantly determines the first Monday of the month. This precise logical flow, combining **DATE** and **WEEKDAY** functions, ensures accurate and scalable date management for any dataset in Excel.

For users interested in learning more about the specific parameters used, complete documentation for the WEEKDAY function and related date functions in Excel can be found on the official Microsoft Support website.