

How can I adjust the spacing between subplots in Matplotlib?

Authored by
stats writer

April 19, 2024

RECOMMENDED CITATION

stats writer (2024). *How can I adjust the spacing between subplots in Matplotlib?*. PSYCHOLOGICAL SCALES. Retrieved from <https://scales.arabpsychology.com/?p=136941>

To adjust the spacing between subplots in Matplotlib, use the `subplots_adjust()` function. This function allows you to specify the spacing between subplots in terms of the width and height of the entire figure. By adjusting the spacing, you can create a more visually appealing layout for your subplots. This can be particularly useful when creating complex plots with multiple subplots that need to be evenly spaced. Additionally, the `subplots_adjust()` function also allows you to adjust the margins around the subplots, providing further control over the spacing and layout of your plots. Overall, using the `subplots_adjust()` function can greatly enhance the overall look and readability of your plots in Matplotlib.

Adjust Spacing Between Matplotlib Subplots

Often you may use subplots to display multiple plots alongside each other in Matplotlib. Unfortunately, these subplots tend to overlap each other by default.

The easiest way to resolve this issue is by using the Matplotlib `tight_layout()` function. This tutorial explains how to use this function in practice.

Create Subplots

Consider the following arrangement of 4 subplots in 2 columns and 2 rows:

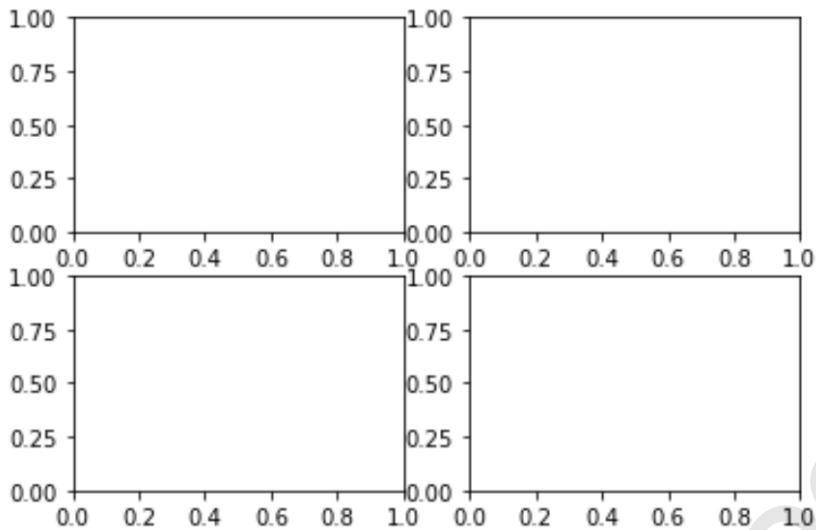
```
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
```

```
#define subplots
```

```
fig, ax = plt.subplots(2, 2)
```

```
#display subplots
```

plt.show()



Notice how the subplots overlap each other a bit.

Adjust Spacing of Subplots Using `tight_layout()`

The easiest way to resolve this overlapping issue is by using the Matplotlib `tight_layout()` function:

```
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
```

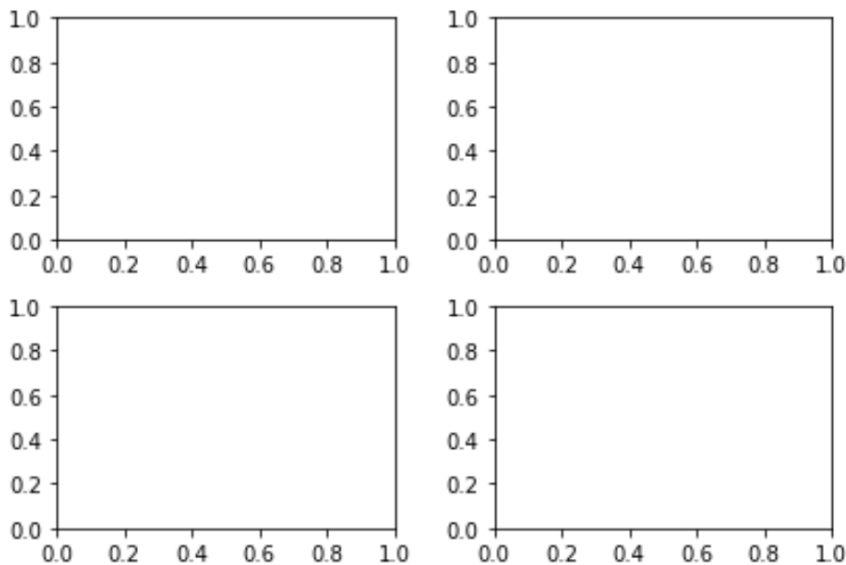
```
#define subplots
```

```
fig, ax = plt.subplots(2, 2)
```

```
fig.tight_layout()
```

```
#display subplots
```

```
plt.show()
```



Adjust Spacing of Subplot Titles

In some cases you may also have titles for each of your subplots. Unfortunately even the `tight_layout()` function tends to cause the subplot titles to overlap:

```
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
```

```
#define subplots
```

```
fig, ax = plt.subplots(2, 2)
```

```
fig.tight_layout()
```

```
#define subplot titles
```

```
ax.set_title('First Subplot')
```

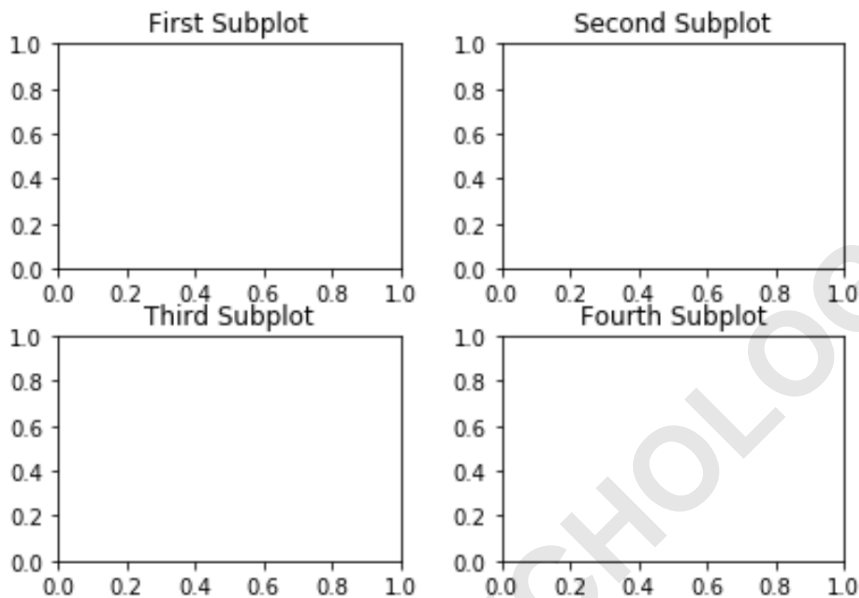
```
ax.set_title('Second Subplot')
```

```
ax.set_title('Third Subplot')
```

```
ax.set_title('Fourth Subplot')
```

```
#display subplots
```

```
plt.show()
```



The way to resolve this issue is by increasing the height padding between subplots using the `h_pad` argument:

```
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
```

```
#define subplots
```

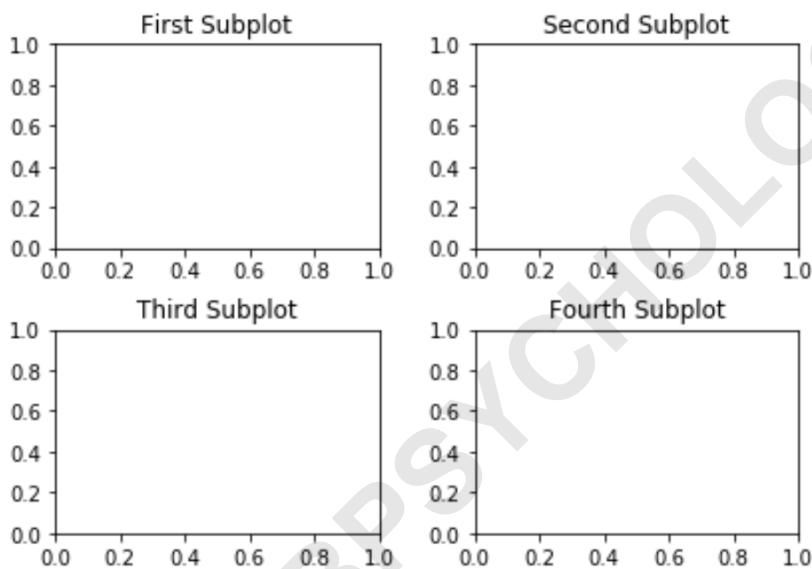
```
fig, ax = plt.subplots(2, 2)
```

```
fig.tight_layout(h_pad=2)
```

```
#define subplot titles
```

```
ax.set_title('First Subplot')  
ax.set_title('Second Subplot')  
ax.set_title('Third Subplot')  
ax.set_title('Fourth Subplot')
```

```
#display subplots  
plt.show()
```



Adjust Spacing of Overall Title

If you have an overall title, you can use the `subplots_adjust()` function to ensure that it doesn't overlap with the subplot titles:

```
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
```

#define subplots

```
fig, ax = plt.subplots(2, 2)  
fig.tight_layout(h_pad=2)
```

#define subplot titles

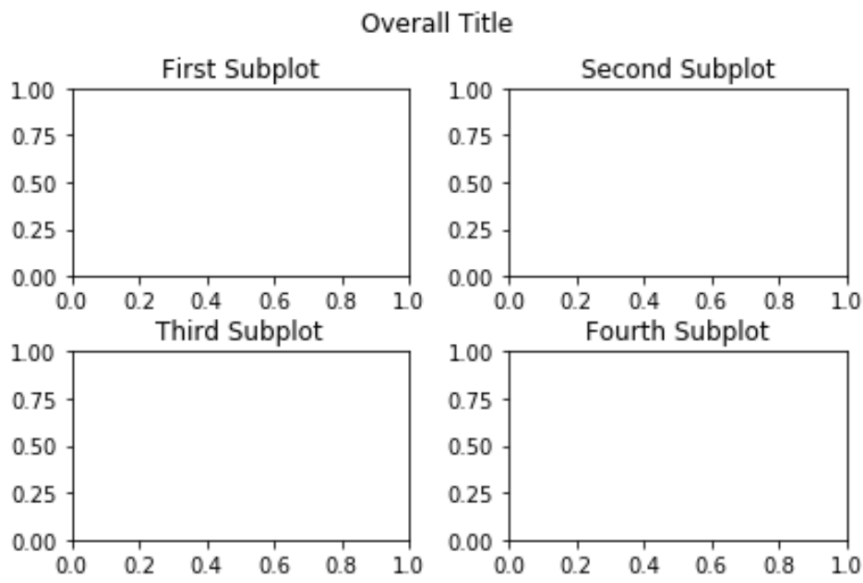
```
ax.set_title('First Subplot')  
ax.set_title('Second Subplot')  
ax.set_title('Third Subplot')  
ax.set_title('Fourth Subplot')
```

**#add overall title and adjust it so that it doesn't overlap
with subplot titles**

```
fig.suptitle('Overall Title')  
plt.subplots_adjust(top=0.85)
```

#display subplots

```
plt.show()
```



You can find more Matplotlib tutorials [here](#).

ARABPSYCHOLOGY.COM