

How to Calculate the Average of Data in Google Sheets, Ignoring Zeros and Blanks

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Welcome to this detailed guide on mastering statistical calculations in [Google Sheets](#). Calculating the average of a data set is a fundamental task, but accurately reflecting meaningful trends often requires excluding specific values, such as zeroes or blank cells. This is particularly crucial when dealing with real-world measurements where a zero might represent a non-event (which should be excluded) rather than a recorded measurement of zero magnitude (which should be included).

To calculate the statistical average of your data in [Google Sheets](#) while completely ignoring zero and blank cells, you must utilize the powerful **AVERAGEIF function**. This function provides the necessary conditional logic to filter out unwanted entries before the calculation is performed, ensuring your final average is statistically robust and representative of your non-zero metrics. We will walk through the exact methodology and demonstrate its application with practical examples.

Google Sheets: Calculate Average and Ignore Zero and Blanks

The Essential Formula for Conditional Averaging

The core solution for this requirement lies in using the **AVERAGEIF function**. Unlike the standard AVERAGE function, which processes all numerical values (including zero), AVERAGEIF function allows you to specify a conditional criteria that determines which cells are included in the calculation. This capability is essential for data cleaning and analysis when specific non-contributing values must be excluded from statistical summaries.

The syntax for this function is straightforward: `=AVERAGEIF(range, criterion,)`. When calculating the average while ignoring zeroes, the structure simplifies considerably, as the range being evaluated is also the range being averaged. The critical component is the criterion, which must explicitly state that the cell value should **not be equal to zero**. In spreadsheet logic, the "not equal to" operator is represented by `<>`. Therefore, the complete criterion is represented as `"<>0"`.

It is important to note a crucial default behavior of [Google Sheets](#): blank cells are automatically ignored by both the **AVERAGE** and **AVERAGEIF function**. This means we only need to actively filter out the numerical value of zero. If a cell contains a blank value (is empty), it is excluded; if it contains a zero, it is included in standard averaging. By applying the `"<>0"` criteria, we successfully exclude both blank cells (by default) and cells containing the number zero (by explicit instruction).

You can use the following formula to calculate the average in [Google Sheets](#) while ignoring zeros and blank cells. Replace `B2:B11` with your actual data range:

`=AVERAGEIF(B2:B11, "<>0")`

Step-by-Step Implementation Guide

Implementing the **AVERAGEIF function** is a simple process involving defining your data range and applying the correct conditional statement. This method ensures high accuracy, especially in large data sets where manual filtering would be error-prone and time-consuming. Adhering to these steps will guarantee the correct result.

The procedure is as follows:

Identify the Data Range: Determine the exact column and row references for the data set you wish to analyze. For instance, if your sales figures are located in column B, starting at row 2 and ending at row 14, your range is `B2:B14`.

Input the Function: Select the cell where you want the resulting average to appear (e.g., cell D2) and begin typing the function `=AVERAGEIF(`.

Specify the Range and Criteria: Immediately follow the function name with your range and the conditional criteria, separated by a comma. The full formula structure should look like `=AVERAGEIF(B2:B14, "<>0")`.

Execute the Calculation: Press the **Enter** key. Google Sheets will now calculate the average, systematically excluding any cell within the specified range that is either completely blank or contains the numerical value zero.

This particular formula calculates the average value in the range **B2:B14** and effectively ignores cells that are equal to zero or blank. The immediate benefit of this method is the elimination of statistical bias caused by data points that represent missing information or zero activity that should not factor into the calculation of typical performance.

The Importance of Ignoring Zeroes in Data Analysis

Understanding when to ignore a zero value is fundamental to sound data analysis. In many contexts, a zero might not represent a valid measured data point but rather a lack of data entry, an irrelevant activity period, or an absence of engagement. Including these non-contributing zeroes artificially drives the overall average down, leading to potentially misleading conclusions about performance or trends.

Consider the scenario of employee sales tracking. If an employee was on vacation for a week, their sales entry might be left blank or recorded as zero. If we include this zero in the average calculation alongside employees who were actively selling, the resulting average sales per employee will be lower than the true average sales per **active** employee. By using `"<>0"` as the conditional criteria, we ensure that the average accurately reflects the performance of those

employees who actually contributed data greater than zero.

Furthermore, standard statistical practices dictate that missing values (represented by blank cells) should be omitted from mean calculations. Since Google Sheets handles blank cell exclusion automatically, our focus shifts entirely to the suppression of zero values. This combined approach--default blank exclusion plus explicit zero exclusion--results in a clean, high-fidelity average that truly represents the positive magnitude of the measured event.

Example: Calculate Average & Ignore Zero and Blank Cells in Google Sheets

To solidify this concept, let us work through a practical example using a typical sales data set. Suppose we have compiled the total weekly sales made by various employees at a company. This data set includes several entries that are zero (representing weeks with no recorded sales, perhaps due to inventory issues or other factors that should not skew the average performance metric) and some entries that are blank (representing missing or unaudited data).

The initial data table, showing Employee IDs and their respective Sales figures, is displayed below:

	A	B	C	D
1	Employee	Sales		
2	A	10		
3	B			
4	C	4		
5	D	14		
6	E	6		
7	F			
8	G	3		
9	H	0		
10	I	12		
11	J	0		
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				

If we simply used the standard **AVERAGE function** on the range `B2:B14`, Google Sheets would include the zeros but ignore the blanks, leading to a potentially inaccurate result. The standard calculation would include 10 data points (all numbers, including zeros) and ignore 3 blank cells.

The result of the standard average is shown in the image below:

D2 ∇ | fx =AVERAGE(B2:B11)

	A	B	C	D
1	Employee	Sales		Avg. Sales
2	A	10		6.125
3	B			
4	C	4		
5	D	14		
6	E	6		
7	F			
8	G	3		
9	H	0		
10	I	12		
11	J	0		
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				

As demonstrated, the average sales per employee who had a non-blank value is **6.125**. However, this value is skewed downwards by the presence of zeros. If our objective is to find the average sales achieved only by employees who made quantifiable sales (i.e., sales greater than zero), then the standard average is insufficient.

Applying the AVERAGEIF Formula to Filter Data

Our goal is to calculate the average exclusively for employees whose sales value was not blank and was not equal to zero. This distinction is critical for performance reporting, where zero sales might indicate an anomaly that should be excluded from the calculation of typical productivity.

To achieve this targeted calculation, we must use the **AVERAGEIF function** combined with the conditional criteria "<>0". We will input this formula into cell **D2**, referencing the sales data in the range B2:B14:

=AVERAGEIF(B2:B14, "<>0")

The following screenshot illustrates the implementation of this specific formula and the resulting

output in Google Sheets:

D2 fx =AVERAGEIF(B2:B11, "<>0")

	A	B	C	D
1	Employee	Sales		Avg. If Not Zero and Not Blank
2	A	10		8.166666667
3	B			
4	C	4		
5	D	14		
6	E	6		
7	F			
8	G	3		
9	H	0		
10	I	12		
11	J	0		
12				
13				
14				
15				

By applying this formula, the calculation successfully filtered the data. It ignored the three blank cells and the three cells containing zero, focusing only on the six positive sales figures (10, 4, 14, 6, 3, and 12). This methodology calculated the average by only using the values that were neither blank nor equal to zero, providing a far more accurate representation of active sales performance.

Verifying the Calculated Result

To ensure the integrity of the **AVERAGEIF function**, it is beneficial to manually verify the calculation based on the filtered data points. The formula should only consider the sales figures that are strictly greater than zero.

In our example data set, the values greater than zero are:

10 (Employee 1)

4 (Employee 4)

14 (Employee 5)

6 (Employee 8)

3 (Employee 12)

12 (Employee 13)

This results in a total of six data points used in the calculation. The sum of these values is $10 + 4 + 14 + 6 + 3 + 12 = 49$. The manual calculation of the average of these values is therefore: $49 / 6$.

Average of Values Greater than Zero: $(10 + 4 + 14 + 6 + 3 + 12) / 6 = 8.167$ (rounded to three decimal places).

This result precisely matches the value calculated by the **AVERAGEIF function** in cell D2 (8.167). This confirmation highlights the reliability and efficiency of using conditional averaging techniques for precise data analysis in spreadsheets.

Advanced Considerations: When to Use AVERAGEIFS or QUERY

While **AVERAGEIF function** is perfect for handling a single condition (excluding zeroes), data analysis often requires multiple criteria. For scenarios demanding more complex filtering, such as ignoring zeroes **and** averaging only values associated with a specific department or time frame, the **AVERAGEIFS function** or the **QUERY function** are necessary alternatives.

The **AVERAGEIFS function** allows for two or more criteria to be applied simultaneously. For example, to calculate the average sales for only "Active" employees who also had sales greater than zero, the formula would require both the status column criteria and the sales column criteria. While the syntax differs slightly (criteria range comes first in AVERAGEIFS), the underlying principle of conditional inclusion remains the same, providing robust filtering capabilities for multivariate analysis.

Alternatively, the powerful **QUERY function** provides SQL-like capabilities within Google Sheets. Using QUERY, you can select the range, filter out values where the sales column equals zero or is blank, and then calculate the average over the filtered subset. A typical QUERY syntax for this task might look like `=QUERY(A:B, "SELECT AVG(B) WHERE B IS NOT NULL AND B <> 0")`. Although more complex to write initially, QUERY offers unmatched flexibility for combining filtering, aggregation, and sorting within a single function, making it the preferred tool for professional data manipulation.