

# How can I remove characters from a string in R?

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## RECOMMENDED CITATION

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Removing characters from a string in R refers to the process of eliminating specific characters or patterns of characters from a given string. This can be achieved by using various functions and methods available in R, such as the `gsub()` function, which replaces specific characters with another character or a blank space. Other techniques include using regular expressions, the `str_remove()` function, or the `substr()` function. These methods allow for the removal of unwanted characters, making it easier to manipulate and analyze the string data in R.

## Remove Characters from String in R (3 Examples)

You can use the following methods to remove certain characters from a string in R:

### Method 1: Remove One Specific Character from String

```
gsub('character', "", my_string)
```

### Method 2: Remove Multiple Characters from String

```
gsub("[", "", my_string)
```

### Method 3: Remove All Special Characters from String

```
gsub('[ ]', "", my_string)
```

The following examples show how to use each method in practice.

### Method 1: Remove One Specific Character from String

The following code shows how to remove all instances of 'WW' in a certain string:

```
#define string
my_string <- 'HeyWW My namWWe is Doug'

#replace 'WW' in string
my_string <- gsub('WW', '', my_string)

#view updated string
my_string

"Hey My name is Doug"
```

Notice that all instances of 'WW' have been removed from the string.

### Method 2: Remove Multiple Characters from String

The following code shows how to remove all instances of 'STRING1' and 'STRING2' in a certain string:

```
#define some string
my_string <- 'HeySTRING1 My nameSTRING2 is
DougSTRING2'
```

```
#replace WW in string  
my_string <- gsub(" ", "", my_string)
```

```
#view updated string  
my_string
```

```
"Hey My name is Doug"
```

**Notice that all instances of 'STRING1' and 'STRING2' have been removed from the string.**

**Method 3: Remove All Special Characters from String**

**Note: Special characters are any characters that are not numbers or letters.**

```
#define string  
my_string <- 'H*ey My nam%e is D!oug'
```

```
#replace all special characters in string  
my_string <- gsub('[^a-zA-Z0-9]', "", my_string)
```

```
#view updated string  
my_string
```

```
"Hey My name is Doug"
```

**Notice that all special characters have been removed from the string.**

**Additional Resources**

ARABPSYCHOLOGY.COM