

How to Remove Quotes from Excel Cells in 2 Easy Steps

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Remove Quotes in Excel (2 Methods)

Mastering **data cleansing** techniques is a fundamental skill for any professional working with **Microsoft Excel**. Often, when importing information from external databases or **CSV files**, text strings arrive encased in unnecessary quotation marks. These marks, while useful as text qualifiers during the export process, can obstruct data analysis, prevent **VLOOKUP** functions from matching correctly, and clutter the visual presentation of your **spreadsheet**.

There are two primary, highly effective ways to remove quotes from cells in Excel, depending on whether you require a permanent modification or a dynamic solution. The first approach utilizes the built-in interface tools for a quick, global change, while the second leverages powerful functional logic to automate the process across large datasets. Understanding the nuances of each will significantly improve your efficiency in handling complex data structures.

To streamline your workflow, consider the following two methodologies:

Method 1: Use Find and Replace Feature - This is a manual, direct approach ideal for static datasets.

Method 2: Use SUBSTITUTE Function - This is a formula-based, dynamic approach perfect for recurring reports.

The following detailed examples demonstrate how to apply each method in a practical environment using a sample list of professional basketball team names. By following these steps, you can ensure your data remains clean, professional, and ready for advanced computation.

	A	B	C	D	E	
1	Team					
2	"Mavs"					
3	"Spurs"					
4	"Rockets"					
5	"Kings"					
6	"Warriors"					
7	"Nets"					
8	"Lakers"					
9	"Thunder"					
10	"Blazers"					
11	"Jazz"					
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						

Understanding the Find and Replace Utility for Data Cleaning

The **Find and Replace** feature in **Microsoft Excel** is an indispensable tool designed for high-speed text manipulation. It allows users to scan an entire worksheet or a specific selection to locate specific characters or **string** patterns and replace them with something else. When the goal is to remove quotation marks, this tool effectively "deletes" the quotes by replacing them with an empty value, thereby sanitizing the text without requiring complex formulas.

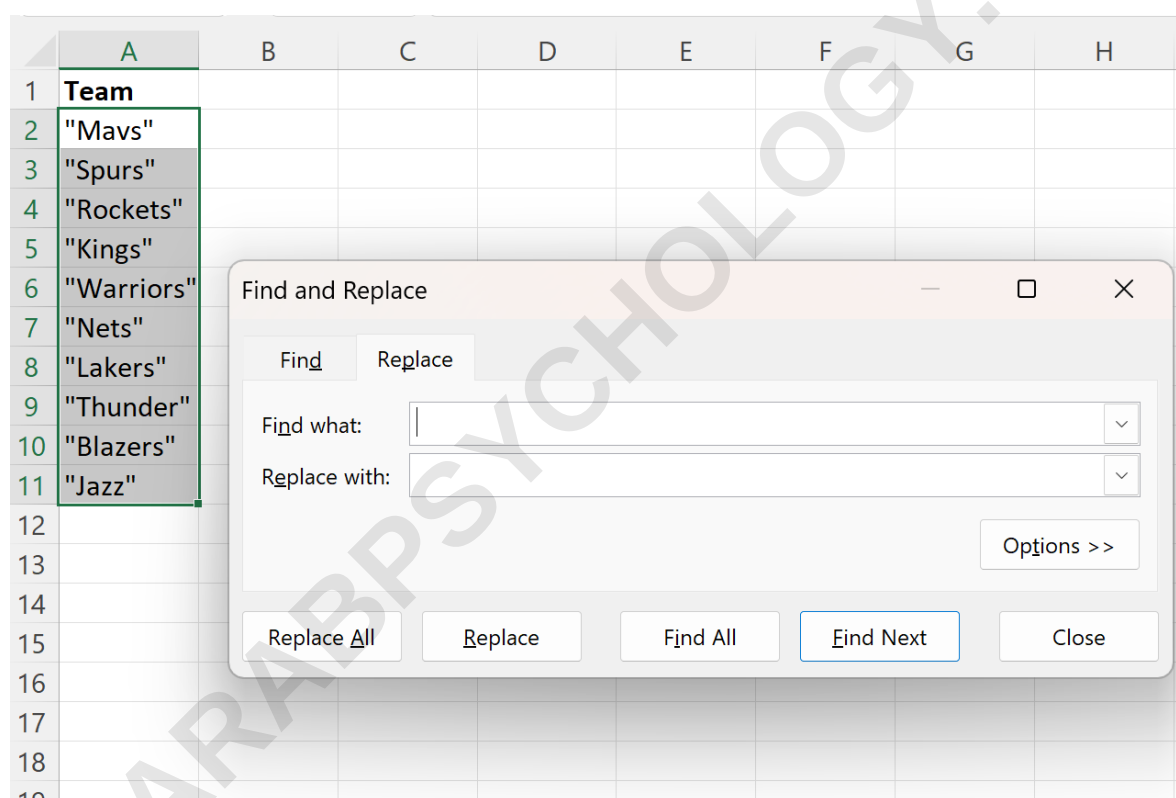
This method is considered a destructive edit because it modifies the original source data directly. It is most appropriate when you are finalizing a report or preparing data for a one-time upload where the historical presence of quotes is no longer relevant. Because it operates on the raw text within the cells, it is exceptionally fast even when dealing with tens of thousands of rows, making it the preferred choice for massive data cleanup tasks that do not need to remain linked to a source.

Before initiating this process, it is always a best practice to create a backup of your data or perform the action on a copy of the worksheet. This ensures that if the **Find and Replace** operation captures characters you intended to keep, you can easily revert to the original state. While quotation marks are generally distinct, in some specialized datasets, they may hold specific meaning that you wish to preserve in certain contexts.

Step-by-Step Implementation of Method 1: Find and Replace

To begin the removal process using the interface, first, highlight the specific cell range that contains the data you wish to modify. In our basketball example, you would highlight the range **A2:A11**. By selecting the range first, you prevent Excel from accidentally removing quotation marks from other areas of the **spreadsheet** where they might be necessary, such as in instructional text or specific headers.

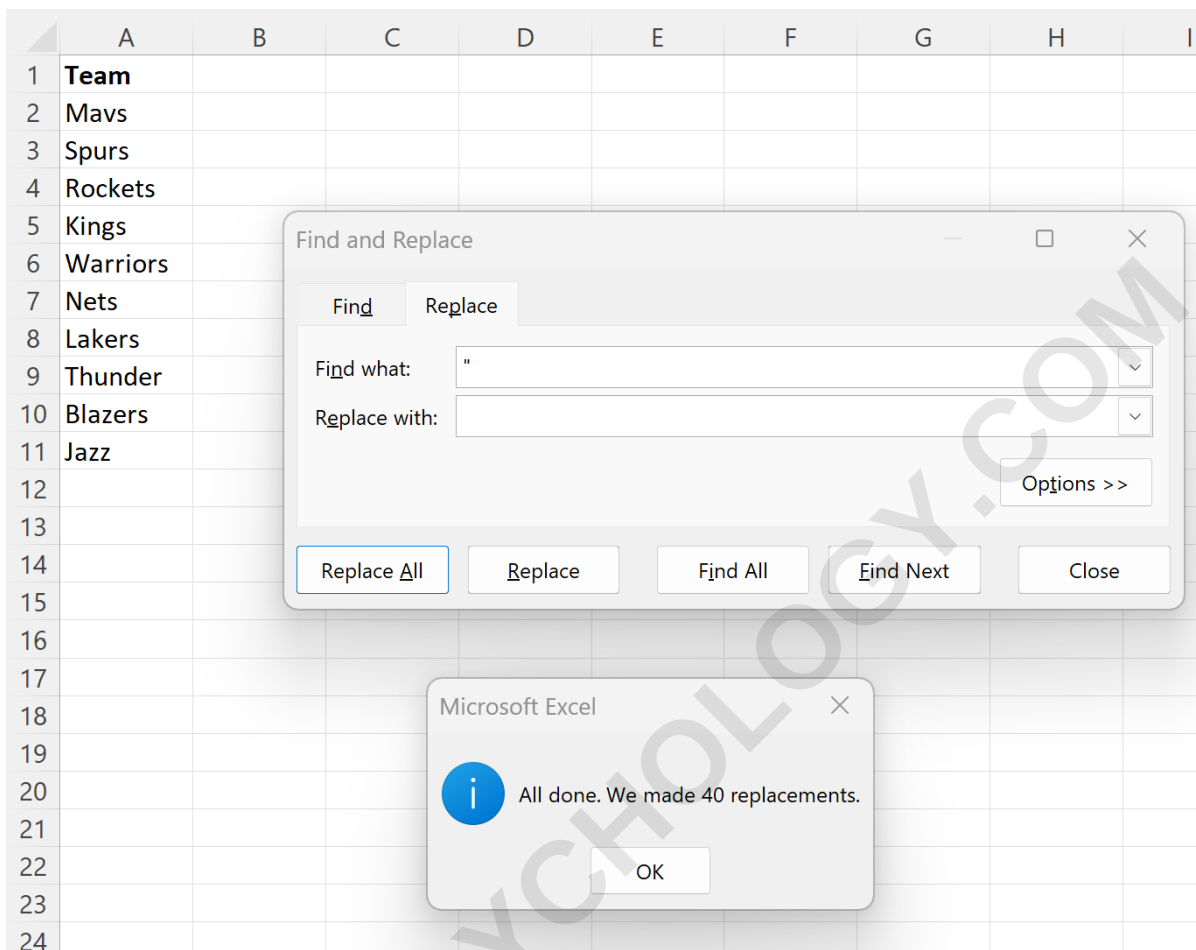
Once the range is selected, initiate the command by pressing **Ctrl + H** on your keyboard. This is the universal **keyboard shortcut** to bring up the **Find and Replace** dialog box. Alternatively, you can navigate to the "Home" tab on the **Ribbon**, click on "Find & Select" in the Editing group, and choose "Replace" from the dropdown menu.



In the dialog box that appears, you will see two primary input fields. In the **Find what** box, type a single quotation mark ("). In the **Replace with** box, leave it completely empty. By leaving this field blank, you are instructing **Microsoft Excel** to find every instance of a quote and substitute it with "nothing," effectively removing the character from the cell content.

After confirming the inputs, click the **Replace All** button. Excel will execute the command across your selected range and then display a confirmation message box. This message is particularly useful as it informs you exactly how many replacements were made, providing a quick audit trail to

verify that the operation performed as expected across the entire dataset.



As you can observe in the updated range, the quotation marks surrounding each team name have been successfully eliminated. The data is now clean and ready for further analysis or reporting without the visual distraction of extraneous symbols.

Method 2: Utilizing the **SUBSTITUTE** Function for Dynamic Results

While the manual method is effective for static changes, many **Microsoft Excel** users prefer a dynamic solution that automatically updates if the source data changes. This is where the **SUBSTITUTE function** becomes invaluable. This function is specifically designed to replace existing text with new text in a text **string**, and it offers a non-destructive way to clean data by outputting the result into a new column.

The **SUBSTITUTE function** is particularly powerful because it is case-sensitive and allows you to specify which occurrence of a character you wish to replace. However, for the purpose of removing all quotes, we configure it to replace every instance found within a cell. This ensures that whether a quote appears at the beginning, the middle, or the end of a string, it will be identified and removed

consistently.

Using a **formula** approach is best practice when working with linked data or when building templates. If you import a new list of team names into Column A next week, a formula in Column B will immediately reflect the cleaned names without you having to manually run a **Find and Replace** operation again. This automation is a cornerstone of efficient spreadsheet management.

The Technical Logic of Character Codes and CHAR(34)

When writing a formula to remove quotation marks, a unique challenge arises: quotation marks are used within Excel formulas to signify the beginning and end of text strings. Therefore, you cannot simply type a quote inside the formula's arguments without confusing the **syntax**. To circumvent this, we use the **CHAR function**.

The **CHAR function** returns the character specified by a number based on the **ASCII** or **ANSI** character set used by your computer. In these systems, the number **34** represents the double quotation mark. By using **CHAR(34)** within your formula, you are explicitly telling Excel to look for the double quote character without breaking the formula's logic with literal quotes.

This level of technical precision is what allows Excel to handle complex **character encoding** issues. Understanding character codes opens up a wide range of possibilities for data cleaning, such as removing line breaks (CHAR(10)) or non-breaking spaces (CHAR(160)), which are often invisible but cause significant issues during data processing and mathematical operations.

Applying the SUBSTITUTE Formula in Practice

To implement this method, we will create a new column to house our cleaned results. In cell **B2**, we will input a formula that references the original data in cell **A2**. The structure of the **SUBSTITUTE function** requires three primary arguments: the text to search, the old text to find, and the new text to replace it with.

Enter the following formula into cell **B2**:

```
=SUBSTITUTE(A2, CHAR(34), "")
```

In this **formula**, **A2** is the source cell, **CHAR(34)** identifies the double quotes we want to remove, and the final empty quotes ("") represent the empty string that will replace the quotes. Once you press Enter, cell B2 will display the team name without any quotation marks. You can then use the **fill handle** (the small square at the bottom-right of the cell) to drag the formula down to the rest of the cells in the column.

B2		=SUBSTITUTE(A2, CHAR(34), "")		
	A	B	C	D
1	Team	Remove Quotes from Team		
2	"Mavs"	Mavs		
3	"Spurs"	Spurs		
4	"Rockets"	Rockets		
5	"Kings"	Kings		
6	"Warriors"	Warriors		
7	"Nets"	Nets		
8	"Lakers"	Lakers		
9	"Thunder"	Thunder		
10	"Blazers"	Blazers		
11	"Jazz"	Jazz		
12				
13				
14				

As shown in the image, Column B now successfully returns each team name from the corresponding cell in Column A with all quotes removed. This method provides a clear, side-by-side comparison of the original and cleaned data, which is excellent for verifying accuracy before proceeding with further data analysis or visualization tasks.

Comparing Static and Dynamic Methods for Workflow Optimization

Choosing between **Find and Replace** and the **SUBSTITUTE function** depends largely on your specific workflow requirements. The static method (Find and Replace) is faster for one-off tasks and keeps your **Microsoft Excel** workbook lightweight since it doesn't require extra columns or active calculations. However, it lacks the flexibility to adapt if the source data is updated or replaced with new information containing the same formatting issues.

On the other hand, the dynamic method (SUBSTITUTE) is superior for building robust, reusable data models. By maintaining a separation between the raw "dirty" data and the "clean" output, you create a more transparent data pipeline. If an error is discovered in the cleaning logic, you can simply update the formula in one place and apply it to the entire column, rather than having to re-import and re-clean the data from scratch.

Furthermore, the formula method can be combined with other functions like **TRIM** or **CLEAN** to perform multiple **data cleansing** steps simultaneously. For example, you could wrap the SUBSTITUTE function inside a TRIM function to remove both the quotation marks and any

accidental leading or trailing spaces in a single step, further refining your dataset for professional use.

Advanced Tips for Maintaining Data Integrity in Excel

When performing any bulk removal of characters, maintaining **data integrity** should be your top priority. Always double-check that the characters you are removing are truly unnecessary. In some instances, quotation marks might be used to indicate inches or seconds in technical datasets. In such cases, a global **Find and Replace** would strip away vital measurements, leading to inaccurate data analysis.

Another tip for advanced users is to convert formula results back into static values once the cleaning is complete. If you use the **SUBSTITUTE function** and are satisfied with the results, you can copy the column and use **Paste Special > Values** to replace the formulas with their results. This prevents the spreadsheet from recalculating every time a change is made, which can improve performance in very large workbooks.

Finally, consider the source of your data. If you are frequently receiving data with unwanted quotes, it may be worth investigating the export settings of the source software. Often, adjusting the **delimiter** or text qualifier settings during the export process can eliminate the need for cleaning in **Microsoft Excel** altogether, saving you significant time in the long run.

Troubleshooting Common Issues with Quotation Mark Removal

Occasionally, users may find that after running a **Find and Replace**, some quotes remain. This often happens because the data contains "smart quotes" (curly quotes) instead of standard straight quotes. Excel treats these as different characters. To fix this, you may need to copy a curly quote directly from a cell and paste it into the **Find what** box to ensure the tool recognizes and removes those specific variations.

If you are using the **SUBSTITUTE function** and it doesn't seem to be working, verify that the character code **CHAR(34)** is indeed what you need. While double quotes are standard, some systems might use single quotes or even backticks. You can use the **CODE** function in Excel to identify the specific **ASCII** value of any character in your cell to ensure your **SUBSTITUTE** formula is targeting the correct symbol.

Lastly, ensure that your cells are not formatted as "Text" in a way that prevents formulas from executing. If you see the formula text itself in the cell instead of the cleaned team name, change the cell format to "General" and press F2 followed by Enter to force Excel to recognize the **formula**. These small troubleshooting steps ensure that your quote removal process remains smooth and error-free.

The following tutorials explain how to perform other common tasks in Excel:

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