

# How can I use dplyr to replace a specific string in a column?

Authored by  
**stats writer**

June 27, 2024

## RECOMMENDED CITATION

stats writer (2024). *How can I use dplyr to replace a specific string in a column?*. PSYCHOLOGICAL SCALES. Retrieved from <https://scales.arabpsychology.com/?p=155694>

Dplyr is a popular data manipulation package in R that allows users to easily perform data wrangling tasks. One useful feature of dplyr is the ability to replace a specific string in a column of a data frame. This can be achieved by using the dplyr function "mutate" and the "str\_replace" function from the stringr package. By combining these functions, users can efficiently replace a specific string in a column with a desired value, making data cleaning and transformation processes more streamlined and efficient.

## Replace String in Column Using dplyr

You can use the following methods to replace a string in a specific column of a data frame using functions from the package:

### Method 1: Replace One String with New String

```
library(dplyr)
```

```
library(stringr)
```

```
df %>%
```

```
mutate(across('column_name', str_replace, 'old_value',  
'new_value'))
```

### Method 2: Replace Multiple Strings with New String

```
library(dplyr)
```

```
library(stringr)
```

```
df %>%
```

```
mutate(across('column_name', str_replace,  
'old_value1|old_value2', 'new_value'))
```

The following examples show how to use each method with the following data frame in R:

```
#create data frame
```

```
df <- data.frame(conf=c('East', 'East', 'West', 'West'),  
position=c('P_Guard', 'P_Guard', 'S_Guard', 'S_Guard'),  
points=c(22, 25, 29, 13))
```

```
#view data frame
```

```
df
```

```
conf position points
```

```
1 East P_Guard 22
```

```
2 East P_Guard 25
```

```
3 West S_Guard 29
```

```
4 West S_Guard 13
```

**Example 1: Replace One String with New String**

The following code shows how to replace the string 'East' in the conf column with the string 'Eastern':

```
library(dplyr)
```

```
library(stringr)
```

```
#replace 'East' with 'Eastern' in conf column
```

```
df %>%
```

```
mutate(across('conf', str_replace, 'East', 'Eastern'))
```

```
conf position points
```

```
1 Eastern P_Guard 22
```

```
2 Eastern P_Guard 25
```

```
3 West S_Guard 29
```

```
4 West S_Guard 13
```

Notice that each 'East' string has been replaced with 'Eastern' in the conf column, while all other columns have remain unchanged.

**Example 2: Replace Multiple Strings with New String**

The following code shows how to replace the string 'P\_' and 'S\_' in the conf column with an empty string:

```
library(dplyr)
```

```
library(stringr)
```

```
#replace 'P_' and 'S_' with empty string in position
```

**column**

**df %>%**

**mutate(across('position', str\_replace, 'P\_|S\_', ''))**

**conf position points**

**1 East Guard 22**

**2 East Guard 25**

**3 West Guard 29**

**4 West Guard 13**

Notice that each 'P\_' and 'S\_' string have been replaced with an empty string in the position column, while all other columns have remain unchanged.

Note that we used the "OR" ( | ) operator to tell R that we'd like to replace any strings equal to 'P\_' or 'S\_' with an empty string.

Feel free to use as many "OR" ( | ) operators as you'd like to replace as many values as you'd like in a column at once.

**Additional Resources**

**The following tutorials explain how to perform other common tasks using dplyr:**