

How can I use the VLOOKUP function in Excel to retrieve data from multiple columns and return only one result?

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The VLOOKUP function in Excel allows users to retrieve data from multiple columns and return a single result based on a given search criteria. This function is commonly used in data analysis and can save time and effort when working with large sets of data. By specifying the lookup value and the range of columns to search, the VLOOKUP function returns the value of the first matching entry in the specified column. This helps users quickly find and extract specific information from a table or database, making it a valuable tool for organizing and analyzing data in a more efficient manner.

Excel: VLOOKUP from Multiple Columns with Only One Return

Often you may want to look up values in multiple columns in Excel and return a corresponding value in another column.

For example, you may want to look up the team "Spurs" and the position "Center" in the following dataset and return the corresponding value from the points column:

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1		Team	Position	Points		
2		Mavs	Guard	22		
3		Mavs	Forward	18		
4		Mavs	Center	14		
5		Spurs	Guard	19		
6		Spurs	Forward	39		
7		Spurs	Center	35		
8		Rockets	Guard	34		
9		Rockets	Forward	20		
10		Rockets	Center	28		
11						
12						
13						
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15						
16						
17						

The following step-by-step example shows exactly how to do so using the VLOOKUP function.

Step 1: Create the Dataset

First, let's create the following dataset that contains information about various basketball players:

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1		Team	Position	Points		
2		Mavs	Guard	22		
3		Mavs	Forward	18		
4		Mavs	Center	14		
5		Spurs	Guard	19		
6		Spurs	Forward	39		
7		Spurs	Center	35		
8		Rockets	Guard	34		
9		Rockets	Forward	20		
10		Rockets	Center	28		
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Step 2: Create a Helper Column

Next, we need to create a helper column in order for the VLOOKUP function to work correctly.

To do so, type the following formula into cell A2:

=B2&C2

Then click and drag this formula down to each remaining cell in column A:

The screenshot shows an Excel spreadsheet with the following data:

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Helper	Team	Position	Points		
2	MavsGuard	Mavs	Guard	22		
3	MavsForward	Mavs	Forward	18		
4	MavsCenter	Mavs	Center	14		
5	SpursGuard	Spurs	Guard	19		
6	SpursForward	Spurs	Forward	39		
7	SpursCenter	Spurs	Center	35		
8	RocketsGuard	Rockets	Guard	34		
9	RocketsForward	Rockets	Forward	20		
10	RocketsCenter	Rockets	Center	28		
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						

The formula bar at the top shows the formula: `=B2&C2`

Step 3: Perform VLOOKUP from Multiple Columns and Only Return One

Lastly, we can type the following formula into cell G3 to look up "Spurs" in the team column and Center" in the position column and return the corresponding value in the points column:

`=VLOOKUP(G1&G2, A1:D10, 4, FALSE)`

The following screenshot shows how to use this formula in practice:

