

# How can I use xtabs() in R to calculate frequencies?

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April 21, 2024

## RECOMMENDED CITATION

stats writer (2024). *How can I use xtabs() in R to calculate frequencies?*. PSYCHOLOGICAL SCALES. Retrieved from <https://scales.arabpsychology.com/?p=137675>

Xtabs() is a function in the R programming language that allows users to calculate frequencies of categorical variables. This function takes in a data set and allows for the creation of a contingency table, which displays the frequency counts of each unique combination of variables. By using xtabs(), users can easily analyze and summarize large amounts of data, making it a useful tool in statistical analysis and data manipulation. Furthermore, it can be used to identify any patterns or relationships between variables. Overall, xtabs() is a powerful function that aids in the understanding and interpretation of data in R.

## Use xtabs() in R to Calculate Frequencies

The xtabs() function in R allows you to quickly calculate frequencies for one or more variables.

It uses the following basic syntax:

```
xtabs(~variable_name, data=data)
```

where:

**variable\_name:** The variable that you'd like to calculate the frequencies for.  
**data:** The name of the data frame that the variable comes from.

This tutorial shows several examples of how to use this function in practice.

**Example 1: Use xtabs() for One-Way Frequencies**

The following code shows how to use xtabs() to

calculate the frequencies for the variable *team*:

```
#create data frame
```

```
df <- data.frame(team=rep(c('A', 'B', 'C'), times=c(27, 33, 40)),
```

```
position=rep(c('Guard', 'Forward', 'Center'), times=c(20, 50, 30)),
```

```
points=runif(100, 1, 50))
```

```
#view first six rows of data frame
```

```
head(df)
```

```
team position points
```

```
1 A Guard 14.00992
```

```
2 A Guard 19.23407
```

```
3 A Guard 29.06981
```

```
4 A Guard 45.50218
```

```
5 A Guard 10.88241
```

```
6 A Guard 45.02109
```

```
#calculate frequencies of team variable
```

```
xtabs(~team, data=df)
```

```
team
```

```
A B C
```

**27 33 40**

**From the output we can see that:**

**Team A occurs 27 times in the data frame. Team B occurs 33 times in the data frame. Team C occurs 40 times in the data frame.**

**Example 2: Use xtabs() for Two-Way Frequencies**

**The following code shows how to use xtabs() to calculate the two-way frequencies for the variables *team* and *position*:**

```
#create data frame
```

```
df <- data.frame(team=rep(c('A', 'B', 'C'), times=c(27, 33, 40)),
```

```
position=rep(c('Guard', 'Forward', 'Center'), times=c(20, 50, 30)),
```

```
points=runif(100, 1, 50))
```

```
#calculate frequencies of team and position variables
```

```
xtabs(~team+position, data=df)
```

```
position
```

```
team Center Forward Guard
```

**A 0 7 20**

**B 0 33 0**

**C 30 10 0**

**From the output we can see that:**

**There are 0 Centers on team A. There are 7 Forwards on team A. There are 20 Guards on team A.**

**And so on.**

**Using xtabs() for n-Way Frequencies**

**The xtabs() function can actually be used to calculate frequencies for any number of variables by simply using the following syntax:**

**xtabs(~variable1+variable2+variable3+...+variablen,  
data=df)**

**In practice, this function is used most often to calculate one-way and two-way frequencies.**

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