

How do I apply conditional formatting in Excel to highlight dates that are before today?

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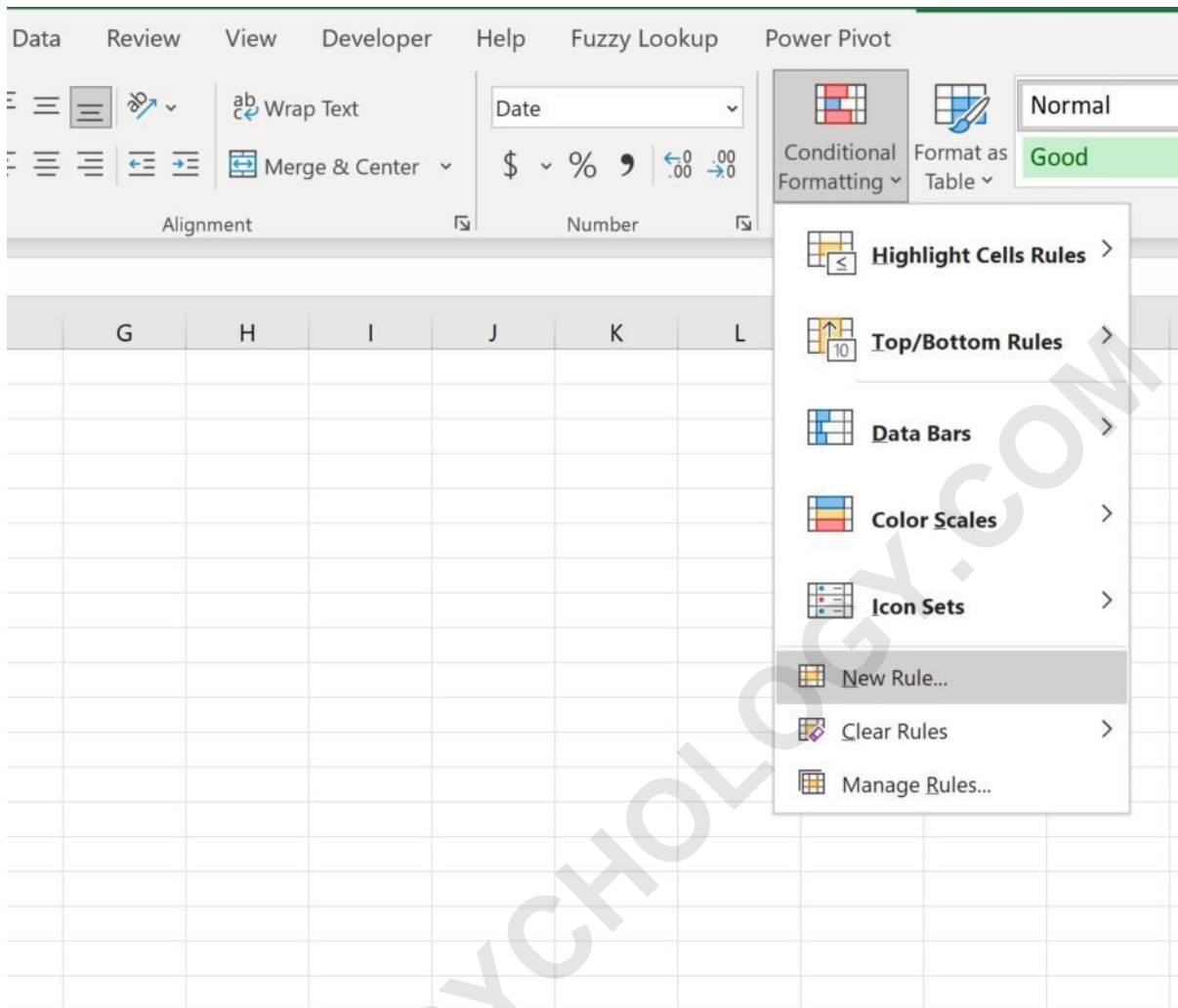
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Conditional formatting is a feature in Microsoft Excel that allows users to automatically format cells based on specific criteria. In order to highlight dates that are before the current date, users can apply conditional formatting by selecting the cells containing the dates and setting up a rule using the "Highlight Cells Rules" option. This rule can be set to highlight cells that are less than the current date, thus identifying and drawing attention to any dates that fall before the current day. This simple yet effective method helps users to easily identify and manage important dates in their Excel spreadsheets.

Excel: Conditional Formatting If Date is Before Today

To apply conditional formatting to cells in Excel that have a date before today, you can use the New Rule option under the Conditional Formatting dropdown menu within the Home tab.



The following example shows how to use this option in practice.

Example: Apply Conditional Formatting to Cells if Date is Before Today

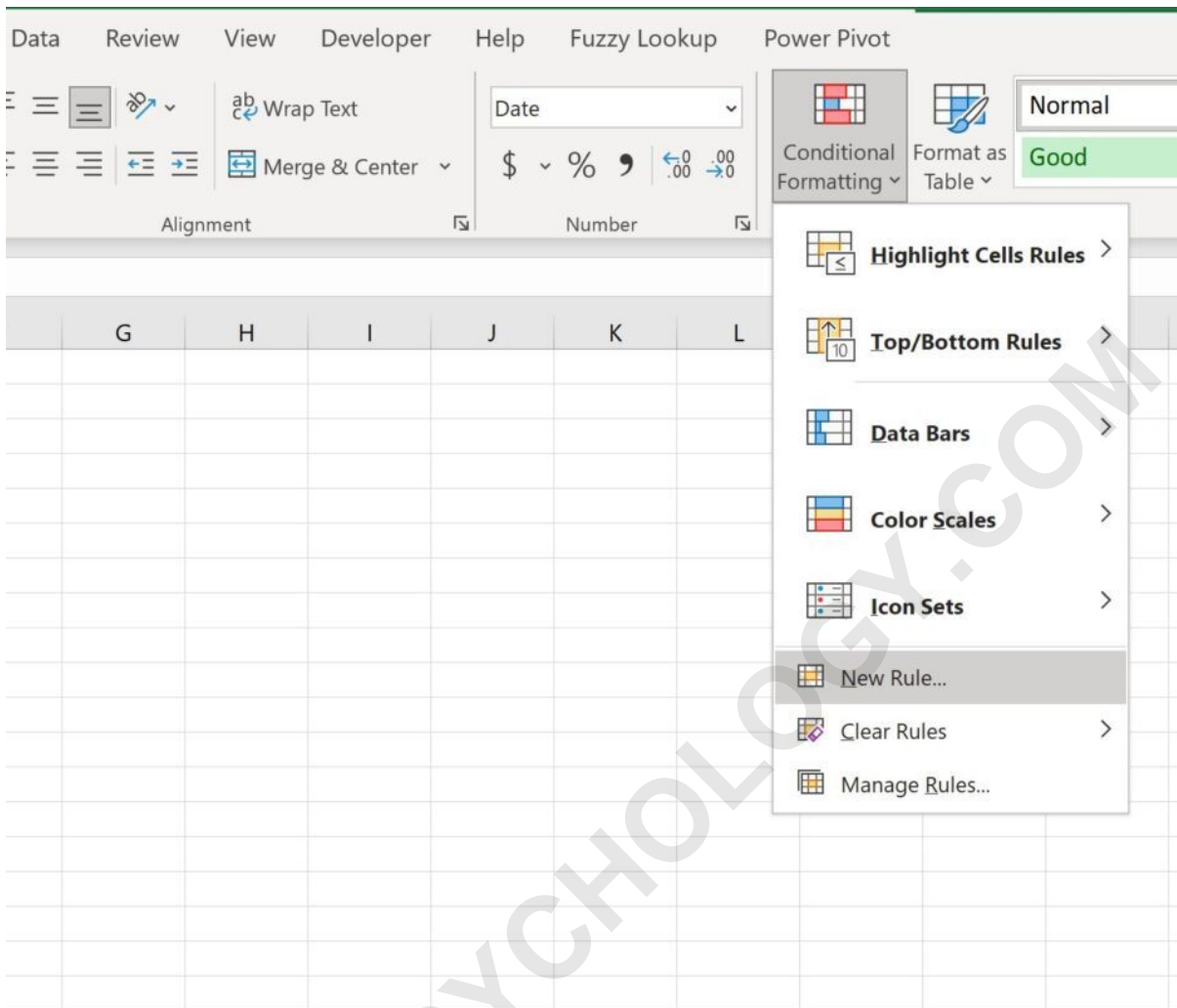
Suppose we have the following dataset in Excel that shows the date that various people applied for some position:

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Name	Application Date			
2	Andy	1/1/2023			
3	Bob	4/15/2023			
4	Chad	5/15/2023			
5	Derrick	6/1/2023			
6	Erin	6/14/2023			
7	Frank	12/14/2022			
8	Greta	9/15/2022			
9	Harry	5/4/2023			
10	Isaac	5/8/2023			
11	John	5/19/2023			
12					
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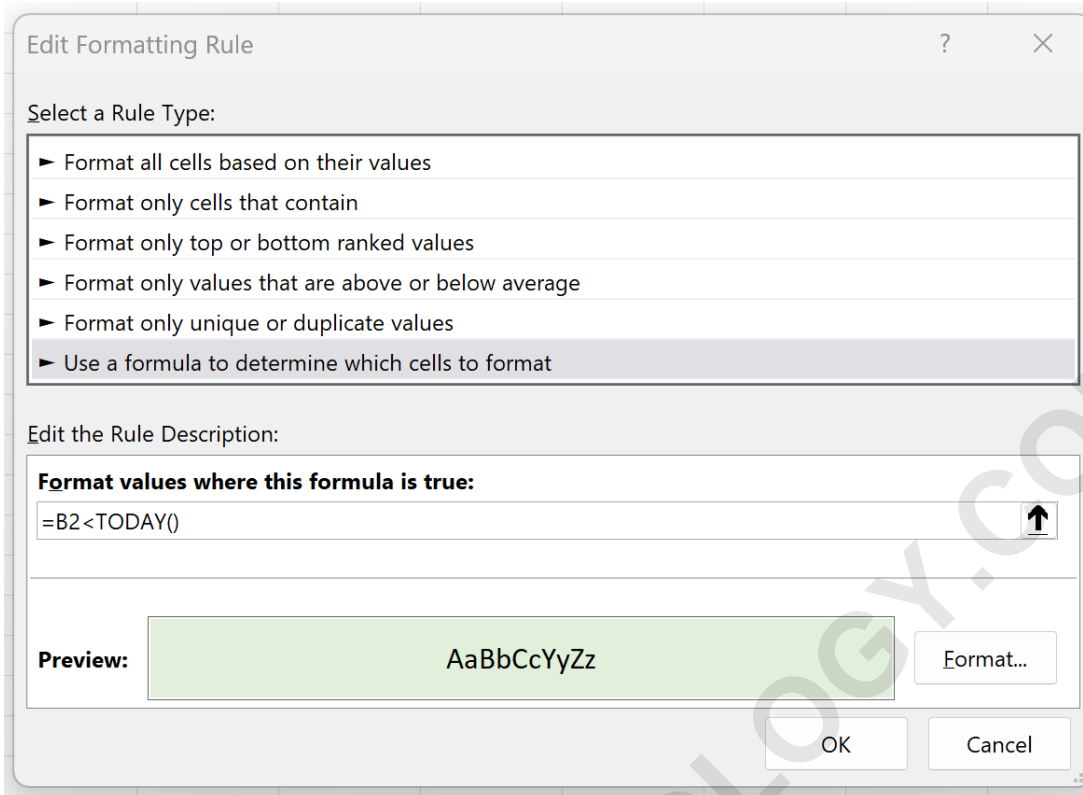
This article is being written on 5/7/2023.

Suppose we would like to apply conditional formatting to any date that is before today.

To do so, we can highlight the cells in the range B2:B11, then click the Conditional Formatting dropdown menu on the Home tab and then click New Rule:



In the new window that appears, click Use a formula to determine which cells to format, then type =B2<TODAY() in the box, then click the Format button and choose a fill color to use.



Once we press OK, all of the cells in the range B2:B11 that have a date before today (5/7/2023) will be highlighted:

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Name	Application Date			
2	Andy	1/1/2023			
3	Bob	4/15/2023			
4	Chad	5/15/2023			
5	Derrick	6/1/2023			
6	Erin	6/14/2023			
7	Frank	12/14/2022			
8	Greta	9/15/2022			
9	Harry	5/4/2023			
10	Isaac	5/8/2023			
11	John	5/19/2023			
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Note: We chose to use a light green fill for the conditional formatting in this example, but you can choose any color and style you'd like for the conditional formatting.