

How to Easily Delete Rows Containing Specific Text in Excel

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Effectively managing large datasets often requires removing unnecessary or irrelevant entries. When working in Excel, deleting rows that contain a specific text string is a common cleanup task necessary for maintaining data integrity and clarity. We will detail two primary non-programming approaches: utilizing the powerful **Find and Select** feature to globally identify and remove records, or employing the **Data Filter** function for a more controlled, visual deletion process. Mastering these techniques ensures your spreadsheets remain accurate and organized.

The core principle involves isolating the unwanted data first--whether through search functions or filtering--and then instructing Excel to eliminate the entire row associated with the matched cells. While both methods achieve the same end result, the **Find and Select** method, which we detail first, is exceptionally fast for single, precise text matches scattered across a large range. Conversely, the **Filter** method offers superior control and visualization before committing to deletion.

This comprehensive, step-by-step guide demonstrates how to delete all rows in Excel that contain specified text using the most efficient methods available, starting with the quick, built-in search functionality.

The first and often fastest method to remove specific rows relies on leveraging the **Find and Select** tool, which allows you to highlight all instances of the unwanted text simultaneously and then delete the corresponding rows in one unified action. This approach is highly effective for deleting large numbers of scattered rows based on a single search criterion.

Method 1: Deleting Rows Using Find and Select

The **Find and Select** feature is a hidden powerhouse for bulk data operations. When used correctly, it bypasses the need for manual selection or complex formulas. This method is particularly useful when the specific text you wish to eliminate appears inconsistently across various columns within your range.

Before initiating any deletion process, it is always recommended to create a backup copy of your worksheet or dataset. Once rows are deleted, the operation is irreversible except via the Undo function (Ctrl+Z), and on massive files, recovering from an accidental deletion can be time-consuming. Safety precautions ensure data integrity throughout the cleansing process.

We will begin with the initial setup of our sample data to illustrate the process clearly, ensuring that all steps are verifiable and easy to replicate.

Step 1: Preparing and Defining the Dataset

First, let's create a sample dataset to work with. For this example, we will use data showing the

performance ratings of several players across different basketball teams. This data structure allows us to clearly see which rows are targeted for deletion based on a specific rating category.

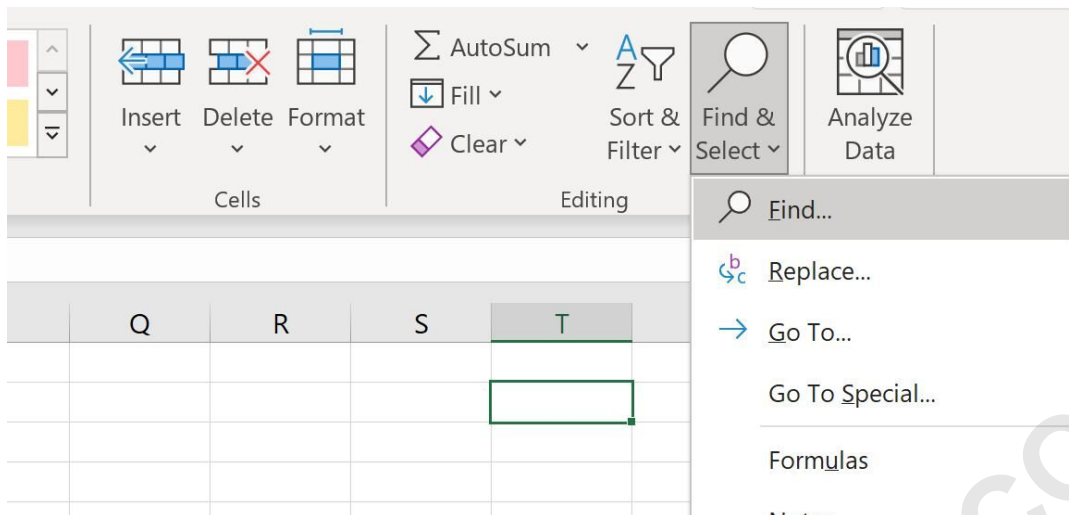
Ensure that your target data is organized in a contiguous range or defined as an **Excel Table**. While the **Find and Select** tool works across the entire active sheet by default, selecting the specific range first minimizes the chance of accidentally searching and deleting rows outside your intended working area. To begin, select the entire range of cells (e.g., A1:C10) that contains the data you wish to clean.

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Team	Player 1 Rating	Player 2 Rating	Player 3 Rating	
2	Mavericks	Good	Average	Bad	
3	Spurs	Good	Good	Great	
4	Rockets	Bad	Average	Good	
5	Hornets	Average	Average	Good	
6	Lakers	Average	Great	Bad	
7	Kings	Average	Bad	Bad	
8	Celtics	Good	Great	Good	
9	Nuggets	Good	Bad	Average	
10	Cavs	Average	Average	Average	
11	Magic	Good	Great	Great	
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					

Step 2: Locating Values with Specific Text Using 'Find All'

Now, suppose our objective is to purge the dataset of any rows associated with a low performance score. Specifically, we would like to delete every row that contains the text string **Bad** within any of the rating columns. This process requires utilizing the Find and Replace utility's advanced search capabilities.

Navigate to the **Home** tab on the Excel ribbon. Locate the **Editing** group, click the **Find & Select** icon (usually represented by a magnifying glass), and then click **Find** from the subsequent dropdown menu. Alternatively, you can use the keyboard shortcut **Ctrl+F** to immediately open the Find dialog box, which saves considerable time.



In the new **Find and Replace** window that appears, type the exact text string you are targeting--in this case, **Bad**--into the search box labeled **Find what:**. It is important to consider the search scope at this stage. By default, Excel will search the currently selected range or the entire sheet. For maximum precision, ensure that you review the options available under the **Options >>** button, particularly if you need to match the entire cell contents or search within formulas.

Once the search term is entered, click **Find All**. This action populates the bottom section of the dialog box with a list of every cell reference containing the search string **Bad**. This list is crucial because it allows us to select all these dispersed cells simultaneously.

To select all the cells listed in the results window, click on any cell reference listed in the results panel, and then press the keyboard shortcut **Ctrl+A** (Select All). This action highlights every single cell containing the text **Bad** on your worksheet. After confirming the cells are highlighted, click **Close** to exit the **Find and Replace** dialog box.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Team	Player 1 Rating	Player 2 Rating	Player 3 Rating			
2	Mavericks	Good	Average	Bad			
3	Spurs	Good	Good	Great			
4	Rockets	Bad	Average	Good			
5	Hornets	Average	Average	Good			
6	Lakers	Average	Great	Bad			
7	Kings	Average	Bad	Bad			
8	Celtics	Good	Great	Good			
9	Nuggets	Good	Bad	Average			
10	Cavs	Average	Average	Average			
11	Magic	Good	Great	Great			

Find and Replace

Find what:

Options >>

Find All Find Next Close

Book	Sheet	Name	Cell	Value	Formula
excel_multiply_column.xlsx	Sheet2		\$D\$2	Bad	
excel_multiply_column.xlsx	Sheet2		\$B\$4	Bad	
excel_multiply_column.xlsx	Sheet2		\$D\$6	Bad	
excel_multiply_column.xlsx	Sheet2		\$C\$7	Bad	
excel_multiply_column.xlsx	Sheet2		\$D\$7	Bad	
excel_multiply_column.xlsx	Sheet2		\$C\$9	Bad	

6 cell(s) found

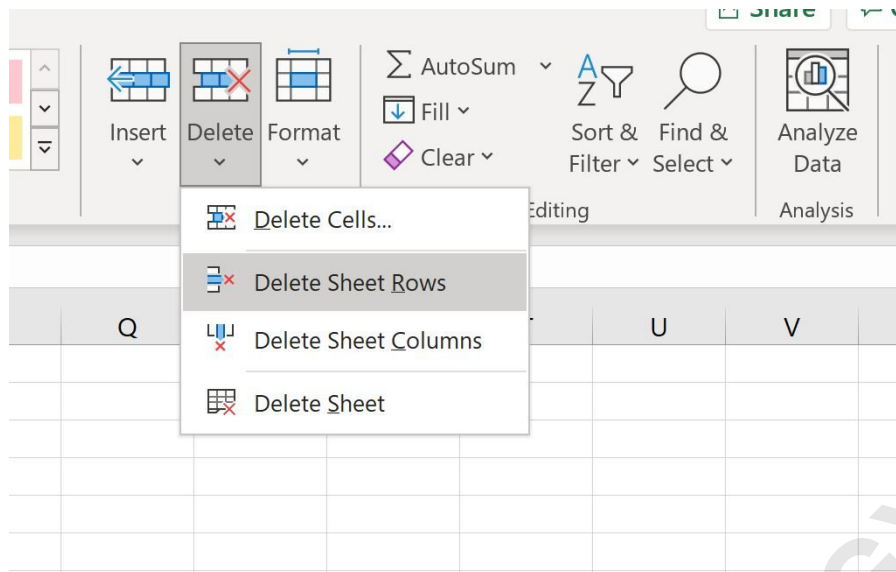
Crucially, all of the cells containing the search string **Bad** will now be simultaneously highlighted and selected across the worksheet. This collective selection is the foundational requirement for the next step: bulk deletion.

Step 3: Executing the Row Deletion

With all the relevant cells selected, we are ready to delete the entire rows associated with them. It is important to use the specific command **Delete Sheet Rows**, as simply pressing the Delete key will only clear the cell contents, not remove the row structure.

Navigate back to the **Home** tab. In the **Cells** group, click the **Delete** icon (which typically shows a red 'X' or an eraser symbol). From the dropdown menu that appears, select **Delete Sheet Rows**.

This single command instructs Excel to eliminate every row that currently contains a selected cell.



Upon execution, all of the rows that contained the text **Bad** in any of their cells will automatically be removed from your dataset, shifting the remaining data up to fill the gaps. The resulting table is now cleansed of the unwanted performance entries.

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Team	Player 1 Rating	Player 2 Rating	Player 3 Rating	
2	Spurs	Good	Good	Great	
3	Hornets	Average	Average	Good	
4	Celtics	Good	Great	Good	
5	Cavs	Average	Average	Average	
6	Magic	Good	Great	Great	
7					
8					
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15					
16					
17					
18					

Method 2: Controlled Deletion using the Data Filter Function

While the **Find and Select** method is fast, it lacks the visual confirmation that many users prefer before performing a bulk deletion. The **Data Filter** method, conversely, allows you to visually isolate the rows targeted for deletion, offering an opportunity to review the selection before committing the action. This method is preferred when dealing with sensitive data or complex criteria.

To utilize the filter method, first ensure your data range has headers. Select the entire range, including the headers, and navigate to the **Data** tab. Click on the **Filter** icon (represented by a funnel). This adds dropdown arrows to your header cells, enabling the filtering mechanism. If your data is already formatted as an Excel Table, the filter arrows will already be present.

Next, click the filter arrow in the column that contains the specific text you want to remove (e.g., the 'Rating' column). In the filter menu, uncheck **Select All**, and then manually check only the text value you wish to retain. Alternatively, for text matching, click on **Text Filters** and select an option like **Does Not Contain...** or **Equals...**, depending on the complexity of your search. For our example, if we wanted to delete all rows containing **Bad**, we would filter to show only those rows that contain **Bad**.

Once the filter is applied, only the rows containing the specific unwanted text (e.g., **Bad**) will be visible. Now, select all these visible rows, starting with the row numbers on the far left of the spreadsheet. Right-click on the selection of row numbers and choose **Delete Row**. Excel will confirm the deletion, and because of the active Filter, it will only delete the currently visible rows, preserving all the hidden rows that contain valid data.

Method 3: Advanced Automation via VBA

For users frequently performing this cleanup task on extremely large datasets (10,000+ rows) or who require complex, conditional deletion criteria, using Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) offers unparalleled speed and flexibility. While this requires basic programming knowledge, it automates the process entirely.

To access the VBA editor, press **Alt+F11**. Insert a new module and paste in the required code. The typical structure of a deletion macro involves iterating backward through the rows (to avoid issues with dynamic row numbering as deletions occur) and checking if a specific cell in that row contains the target string.

Here is a generalized structure of the code used to delete rows containing specific text in Column B:

```
Sub DeleteRowsWithSpecificText()  
Dim ws As Worksheet  
Set ws = ActiveSheet  
Dim LastRow As Long  
Dim i As Long  
  
' Define the specific text to search for  
Const SearchTerm As String = "Bad"  
' Define the column index to search (e.g., 2 for Column B)  
Const SearchColumn As Long = 2  
  
' Determine the last row with data  
LastRow = ws.Cells(ws.Rows.Count, SearchColumn).End(xlUp).Row  
  
' Loop backward through the rows  
For i = LastRow To 1 Step -1  
' Check if the cell contains the search term  
If InStr(1, ws.Cells(i, SearchColumn).Value, SearchTerm, vbTextCompare) > 0 Then  
' Delete the entire row  
ws.Rows(i).Delete  
End If  
Next i  
  
MsgBox "Row deletion complete."  
End Sub
```

This powerful VBA script is superior for handling huge volumes of data where the visual interface methods become slow. It executes the deletion process instantaneously, providing a highly efficient solution for maintaining large databases within Excel. Ensure that the **SearchTerm** and **SearchColumn** constants are correctly defined before running the macro.

Summary of Best Practices for Data Deletion

When deleting data in bulk, employing best practices ensures accuracy and prevents accidental data loss. Always prioritize verification and redundancy checks before executing permanent removal commands.

Backup First: Always save a copy of your workbook before performing any mass deletion operation. This is the single most important safety measure.

Define the Scope: Whether using **Find and Select** or the Filter tool, limit your selection to the specific data range or table you intend to modify. Avoid selecting entire columns (A:A) unless you

are absolutely certain that no relevant data exists outside your primary dataset on that sheet.

Use Filter for Review: If you are unsure of the data quality, use Method 2 (Filtering) first. This allows you to view exactly which rows are about to be deleted before you commit to the deletion, providing a necessary layer of human review.

Be Mindful of Partials: The **Find and Select** method, when used with default settings, will find partial matches (e.g., searching for "day" will find "holiday"). Use the **Match entire cell contents** option in the advanced search settings if you require an exact match only.

By following these detailed steps, you can efficiently and accurately cleanse your spreadsheets, removing unwanted data based on specific text criteria using the highly efficient **Find & Select** technique, the careful **Filter** approach, or the powerful automation of VBA.

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