

Use REGEXTRACT to Break Values Apart

The REGEXTRACT function can break long sequences of letters or numbers into multiple cells as an array. The returned values are always returned as text. In order to make use of numeric data, numbers need to be converted from text to numbers. This is done by copying the array and copying it, then pasting the array back in as values. Then selecting the numeric values and using the Convert Text to Numbers feature.

The syntax of the REGEXTRACT function is

REGEXTRACT(text, "pattern", [return_mode], [case_sensitivity])

- Text: the cell containing the original sequence.
- Pattern: the pattern must be held with a pair of quotation marks
 - "[0-9]": any numerical digit
 - "[a-z]": a character in the range of a to z
 - ".": any character
 - "a": the "a" character
 - "a*": zero or more "a"
 - "a+": one or more "a"
- Return Mode: 0: Return the first string that matches the pattern
 - 1: Return all strings that match the pattern as an array
 - 2: Return capturing groups from the first match as an array
- Case Sensitivity: 0: Case sensitive
 - 1: Case insensitive

In the example below you can see a series of numbers separated by a series of letters. The REGEXTRACT will be used to get both numeric strings into separate cells.

1	12ad546	
2	12ad547	
3	12333add548	

In cell **B1**, enter the following function formula:

=REGEXTRACT(A1," [0-9]+",1)

- **A1** - refers to the cell containing the raw data to be broken apart
- **"[0-9]+"** – sets the pattern as numbers ranging from 0 to 9 while the + allows for returning multiple numbers in a string (*Remember that patterns must be held within quotation marks*)
- **1** – the return mode value of 1 allows the return of multiple strings of numbers

Use Autofill to complete extracting the data.


The values now in columns **B** and **C** are an array that can be selected, copied, and pasted as values.

1	12ad546	12	546
2	12ad547	12	547
3	12333add548	12333	548

Once the values are pasted the cells will show green triangles in the upper left of each cell indicating the numbers are in fact formatted as text.

1	12ad546	12	546
2	12ad547	12	547
3	12333add548	12333	548

Reselect the cells containing the pasted values. A Warning icon appears, click the icon then the drop-down and choose Convert to Number from the menu.

1	12ad546	 12	546
2	12ad547		7
3	12333add5		8

Number Stored as Text

Convert to Number

Help on this Error

Ignore Error

In cell D1 enter the function formula:

=REGEXTRACT(A1,"[a-z]+")

This will extract the text string no matter where it is within the original data in cell **A1**. Since there is only one text string in the data there is no need to and the **Return Mode** argument of the function formula.

1	12ad546	12	546	ad
2	12ad547	12	547	ad
3	12333add548	12333	548	add

Select the data in column **D**, copy and paste it as values into the selected range.

Now you can rearrange the columns to reflect the pattern found in column **A**.