

Learn How to Remove the Percentage Symbol in Excel: A Step-by-Step Guide

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The Challenge of Percentage Formatting in Data Analysis

[Excel](#) remains the industry standard for powerful data management and sophisticated numerical analysis. One of its most frequently used functionalities is the ability to display numerical inputs as [percentages](#). When a data analyst enters a value like **12.3%** into an [Excel cell](#), the application employs a dual storage system. Internally, the raw data is preserved as its decimal equivalent (0.123), while externally, the visual percentage symbol is added to enhance human readability for standard reporting. While this feature is ideal for general financial or statistical documents, it introduces significant complexity when the data must be prepared for integration with advanced analytical tools, external proprietary databases, or specific back-end calculation engines that require clean, non-formatted numerical inputs.

The primary obstacle arises not merely from viewing the underlying decimal value (0.123), but from the specific requirement to extract the visually displayed numerical component (**12.3**), strip the percentage symbol, and then scale the result by a factor of 100, yielding the final number **1230**. Attempting to solve this by simply changing the [cell](#) format from "Percentage" to "General" or "Number" fails to achieve this goal, as it correctly converts 12.3% to its internal numerical representation, 0.123. This scenario--extracting the displayed number, ensuring the symbol is absent, and applying a 100x multiplier--is a critical, specialized task in data cleaning and mandatory compliance reporting that demands a precise transformation methodology.

This comprehensive guide introduces an efficient and precise [formula](#) explicitly designed to execute this exact conversion. By strategically combining robust string manipulation techniques with necessary arithmetic operations, we can systematically transform a percentage-formatted [cell](#) into the required scaled numerical output. This methodology guarantees that the resulting dataset is clean, purely numerical, and perfectly optimized for any subsequent analysis, data export process, or integration that mandates the removal of the percentage symbol and the specific upscaling of the displayed figure by 100 times.

Implementing the Core Formula for Transformation

To successfully remove the visual percentage symbol (%) from an [Excel cell](#) and simultaneously derive a numerical [value](#) that is 100 times greater than the displayed percentage figure, a disciplined [formula](#) approach is essential. This solution capitalizes on the power of text functions to first strip the unwanted character before applying the required arithmetic scaling. The central function employed for the symbol removal phase is the [SUBSTITUTE function](#), which is specifically engineered to replace occurrences of specified text characters within a string.

The definitive structure of the [formula](#) required to execute this specific transformation is presented below. This compact expression encapsulates both the text cleaning and the numerical scaling steps necessary for the desired outcome.

=SUBSTITUTE(A2, "%", "")*100

In this powerful expression, the reference **A2** identifies the source [cell](#) containing the percentage value that is targeted for transformation (e.g., "12.3%"). The inner function, [SUBSTITUTE](#), rigorously searches the content of A2 for all instances of the percentage symbol (represented by "%") and replaces them with an empty string (""). This crucial initial step successfully extracts the numerical string, converting the display from "12.3%" to the intermediate text string "12.3".

Immediately following the symbol removal, the arithmetic component of the [formula](#)--the multiplication by 100--is executed. This operation is indispensable because it serves a dual role: first, it automatically coerces the resulting text string ("12.3") into a usable numerical [value](#) (12.3); and second, it applies the required scaling factor, transforming 12.3 into the final target output of **1230**. This integrated methodology ensures the final output is not only clean but also precisely scaled as required for subsequent data processing tasks.

A Detailed Walkthrough: Applying the Formula to Data

To effectively illustrate the practical application of this specialized transformation [formula](#), let us consider a typical scenario involving a column populated with various [percentages](#). Imagine you are working with a performance metric dataset where the values are stored in Column A of your [Excel](#) spreadsheet. Your objective is to create a new, parallel column of data where all percentage symbols are removed and the resulting numerical values are multiplied by 100.

Suppose your initial data configuration, featuring various percentage metrics, is located in Column A, as depicted in the image below:

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Percentages					
2	12.30%					
3	14%					
4	15.99%					
5	17%					
6	94.50%					
7	35%					
8	37%					
9	44.20%					
10	50%					
11	100%					
12	8%					
13						
14						
15						
16						

Our process is focused on calculating the transformed numerical output for each row in Column A and populating the results in the adjacent Column B. This transformation sequence begins by accurately entering the formula into the first target [cell](#) of the output column, which, in this demonstration, is **B2**.

In cell **B2**, the precise expression you must input is:

=SUBSTITUTE(A2, "%", "")*100

Once the formula is entered and executed, [Excel](#) computes the result for the first row. To efficiently extend this calculation across the entire dataset in Column A without manually re-entering the formula, we leverage the powerful [Autofill](#) feature. Select cell **B2**, locate the small green square known as the "fill handle" at the bottom-right corner of the cell boundary, and drag this handle downwards until it covers all corresponding data rows originating from Column A.

The successful completion of this operation results in Column B being populated entirely with the newly transformed numerical values. The final visual outcome is a streamlined list of pure numbers, completely stripped of the percentage symbol, with each numerical component accurately scaled by 100, as demonstrated in the updated spreadsheet view below:

B2		✕ ✓ <i>fx</i>		=SUBSTITUTE(A2, "%", "")*100		
	A	B	C	D	E	
1	Percentages	% Symbol Removed				
2	12.30%	12.3				
3	14%	14				
4	15.99%	15.99				
5	17%	17				
6	94.50%	94.5				
7	35%	35				
8	37%	37				
9	44.20%	44.2				
10	50%	50				
11	100%	100				
12	8%	8				
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						

As clearly illustrated, the original value of **12.3%**, which resided in cell **A2**, has been seamlessly converted to the clean numerical [value 1230](#) in cell **B2**. This clean output is now presented in a standard numerical format, making the data instantly ready for any subsequent mathematical modeling, statistical charting, or integration into external systems that require specific numerical representations devoid of text characters. This robust method ensures both computational efficiency and high data integrity.

Dissecting the SUBSTITUTE Function Arguments

The entire foundation of our specialized symbol removal [formula](#) relies heavily on the internal mechanics of the [SUBSTITUTE function](#). A thorough understanding of its syntax is crucial for appreciating how it precisely achieves the elimination of the unwanted character. The SUBSTITUTE function in [Excel](#) is explicitly designed to replace specific occurrences of existing text with new text within a designated string. Its full syntax structure is as follows:

=SUBSTITUTE(text, old_text, new_text,)

Let us meticulously examine each argument as utilized within the context of our percentage removal operation, paying close attention to the purpose of each parameter in achieving the

desired transformation:

text: This is a required argument that specifies the source text string or the reference to the [cell](#) containing the content where the substitution will occur. In our formula, this is A2, pointing directly to the percentage [value](#) (e.g., "12.3%"). Critically, SUBSTITUTE operates on the displayed content as a text string, irrespective of the cell's underlying numerical format.

old_text: This required argument defines the exact sequence of characters that needs to be replaced. We input "%". The percentage symbol must be explicitly enclosed in double quotation marks to denote it as a literal text character that the function should search for within the content of A2.

new_text: This is the required argument that specifies the replacement text. We utilize "", which represents an empty string. By using an empty string, we ensure that the found percentage symbol is replaced by nothing, thereby effectively deleting it entirely from the string.

: This argument is optional and is used to limit the replacement to a specific occurrence of the old_text (e.g., specifying 1 replaces only the first occurrence). Since standard percentage values contain only one percentage symbol, omitting this argument, as we do in our formula, is the most reliable approach, guaranteeing that the single symbol is always targeted and removed.

As a result of this configuration, when the expression =SUBSTITUTE(A2, "%", "") processes a cell containing "12.3%", the function successfully identifies the "%" character and replaces it with null content. The immediate output of this text manipulation phase is the text string "12.3". It is imperative to recognize that, at this stage, the result is still classified by Excel as a text string and has not yet undergone conversion into a true numerical [value](#) suitable for direct mathematical calculations. This pivotal detail necessitates the final and most crucial component of the overall formula: the scaling factor.

The Critical Role of Multiplication by 100

The final and equally vital operation within our comprehensive transformation [formula](#) is the multiplication by 100, denoted by *100. As established, the preceding [SUBSTITUTE function](#) delivers a text string output, such as "12.3". Although this string visually represents a number, [Excel](#) must first convert it into a numerical [value](#) before any arithmetic operation can be completed. The multiplication operation is specifically included to serve this critical dual objective: automatic type coercion and the necessary required scaling.

When [Excel](#) encounters a standard mathematical operation involving a text string that is clearly recognizable as numerical, it automatically executes an implicit type conversion. The text string "12.3" is thus automatically coerced into the numerical value 12.3. Following this successful

conversion, the multiplication by 100 is performed. Consequently, the calculation **12.3 * 100** precisely yields the required numerical output of **1230**. This step is non-negotiable for meeting the specific data requirement that the displayed numerical part of the percentage (e.g., 12.3) must be scaled up by two orders of magnitude after the text character removal is complete.

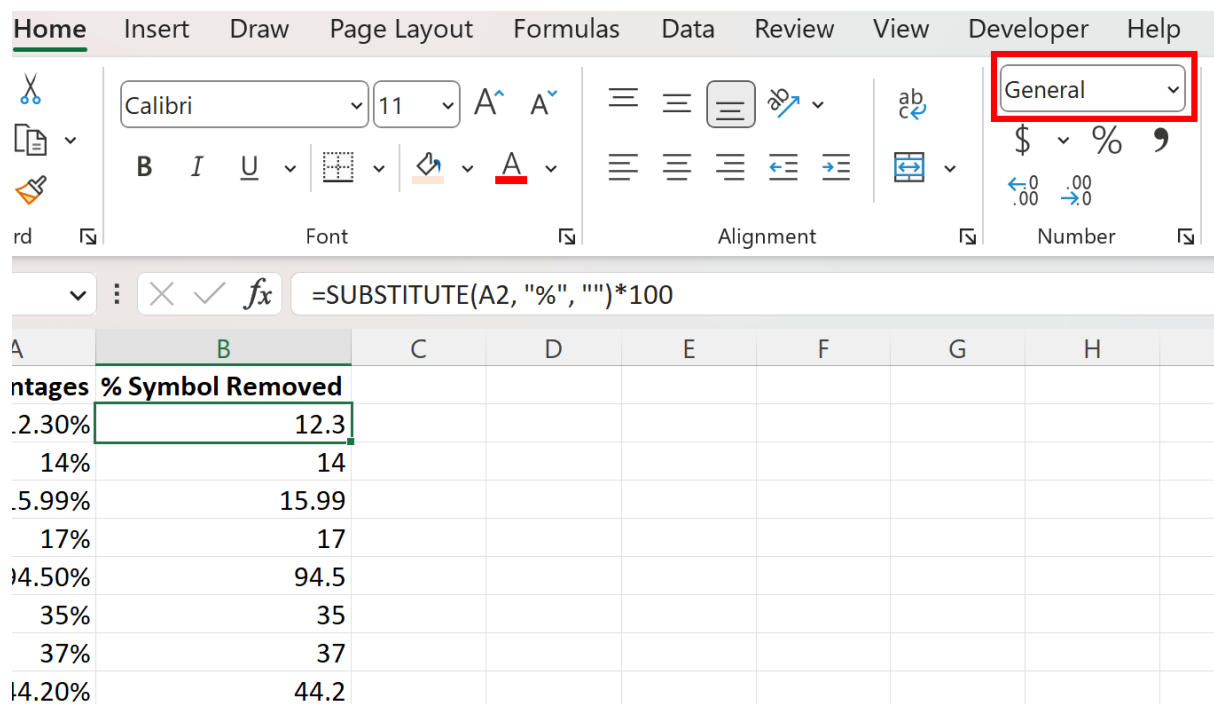
It is vital to distinguish this specialized transformation from the basic conversion of a percentage to its decimal equivalent. If a [cell](#) contains **12.3%**, its true, unformatted numerical value is always **0.123**. If the objective were simply to display **12.3**, one might multiply the underlying value by 100 (i.e., $A2 * 100$ if A2 contained the raw decimal 0.123). However, our formula is engineered to specifically target the *displayed* string content, remove the text symbol, and then apply the *100 factor. This unique sequence ensures that we meet the specific mandate of transforming the displayed number 12.3 into the final scaled numerical output 1230.

Understanding and Utilizing the Resulting Data Format

Once the specialized [formula](#) `=SUBSTITUTE(A2, "%", "")*100` has been fully applied across the dataset, the calculated result in the target [cell](#) will be a pure numerical [value](#), such as **1230**. Due to the necessary implicit text-to-number conversion performed during the multiplication step, [Excel](#) automatically assigns the [General number format](#) to the resulting cells. The General format serves as the default setting, displaying numerical data without imposing specialized formatting rules like currency, dates, or [percentages](#).

The assignment of the [General number format](#) is highly significant for data usability: it confirms that the output values are correctly recognized by [Excel](#) as true, calculation-ready numbers. This status ensures that analysts can confidently execute any subsequent mathematical operation--including summation, averaging, or integration into complex statistical models--without encountering the errors typically associated with arithmetic on text strings. Consequently, the integrity of the data type is fully secured throughout the entire transformation process.

Visual confirmation of this default formatting is provided below, illustrating how the calculated values in Column B are categorized under the General setting within the Number Format menu:



Should your specific analytical requirements necessitate a different visual presentation--such as standardizing the number of decimal places, incorporating currency symbols, or adding thousand separators--you retain complete flexibility to re-format the output cells. Simply select the cells in Column B, navigate to the 'Number' group on the 'Home' tab, and apply the required format (e.g., the 'Number' format with controlled decimal places). The crucial underlying achievement is that the [data type](#) is now definitively numerical, providing maximum flexibility for both data manipulation and professional reporting.

Alternative Data Cleaning Methods

While the combination of the [SUBSTITUTE function](#) and arithmetic multiplication provides the most direct and formulaic route to achieving our precise scaling objective, it is beneficial for advanced users to recognize other viable data manipulation methods available within [Excel](#). These alternatives may cater to different requirements but often involve additional steps or yield fundamentally different results.

Using Find and Replace: The ubiquitous 'Find and Replace' feature (activated typically via Ctrl+H) offers a quick method for bulk removal of the percentage symbol across a selected range of cells. The user would search for "%" and replace it with a null value. However, this method has a major limitation: it is a destructive operation that modifies the original source data unless a protective backup column is first created. Crucially, 'Find and Replace' only performs text removal; it does not incorporate the essential numerical scaling (the *100). After the symbol replacement, the cells would still contain text strings (e.g., "12.3"). An additional, separate step--such as using

'Paste Special' with the multiply operation or applying a separate [formula](#)--would be required to convert this text to a numerical [value](#) and apply the necessary scaling.

Text to Columns Wizard: The [Text to Columns](#) feature, located under the 'Data' tab, is typically utilized for splitting complex text strings based on delimiters or fixed widths. While technically possible to use this feature to separate the numerical component from the symbol, it is unnecessarily complex for the simple task of removing a single trailing character. Furthermore, similar to 'Find and Replace', this method does not incorporate the scaling factor, thereby requiring subsequent arithmetic steps to achieve the desired 100x magnification.

Custom Number Formats: If the only objective is to visually hide the percentage symbol while deliberately retaining the true, underlying decimal [value](#) (e.g., keeping 0.123 for calculations but displaying 0.123), [Custom Number Formats](#) offer an elegant solution. By defining a custom format such as 0.00, you can suppress the display of the percentage sign without altering the cell's actual numerical content. However, this method is strictly for visual presentation purposes, as it explicitly avoids the numerical scaling and text extraction that our primary formula is specifically designed to perform.

While each alternative possesses unique strengths, the formula-based approach utilizing SUBSTITUTE combined with multiplication provides the single most efficient, precise, and non-destructive way to generate a new, scaled numerical dataset from text-based percentage strings.

Conclusion and Best Practices for Data Transformation

Achieving a high level of proficiency in data manipulation within [Excel](#) is a fundamental requirement for effective business intelligence and analytical reporting. The methodology detailed in this guide--converting a percentage-formatted [cell](#) into a scaled numerical [value](#)--demonstrates the powerful synergy between Excel's text manipulation and arithmetic [formula](#) capabilities. We have systematically analyzed the formula `=SUBSTITUTE(A2, "%", "")*100`, confirming its precise ability to convert the displayed string **12.3%** into the required numerical value **1230**.

The key advantages of adopting this technique are paramount for clean data workflow: firstly, its non-destructive nature, which safeguards the original source dataset while producing the transformed output in a separate column; and secondly, its comprehensive handling of both text character removal (via [SUBSTITUTE](#)) and the specific numerical scaling requirement (via `*100`). The resulting output, correctly formatted with the [General number format](#), is fully ready for any subsequent statistical analysis or rigorous arithmetic calculations, guaranteeing accuracy and superior data usability.

As a crucial best practice, always confirm your exact data requirements before implementing any complex transformation logic. If your sole intention is to convert the underlying percentage value

(0.123) to the number 0.123, a simple format change suffices. If your goal is to extract the display number (12.3) and use it as a standard number without scaling, the formula `=VALUE(SUBSTITUTE(A2, "%", ""))` is appropriate. However, for the specific, specialized requirement of converting the displayed numerical part (e.g., **12.3**) to a value 100 times larger (e.g., **1230**) after text symbol removal, the dedicated formula `=SUBSTITUTE(A2, "%", "")*100` stands as the precise and authoritative solution.

Further Resources for Excel Proficiency

To continue advancing your analytical capabilities and addressing diverse data challenges efficiently, exploring related topics and functions within [Excel](#) is highly recommended. These resources will help you build a more robust and versatile toolkit for spreadsheet management and data preparation.

Deepening your expertise in various [number formats](#) and understanding how they influence data presentation without altering the underlying numerical values.

Learning advanced techniques for handling mixed [data types](#), including mastering the conversion between text strings and true numerical values using functions like VALUE and N.

Exploring other essential text manipulation functions beyond SUBSTITUTE, such as TRIM, LEFT, MID, and FIND, for tackling more complex data cleaning and parsing scenarios.

Utilizing conditional formatting to visually highlight or flag data points based on the outcome of complex numerical transformations or logical tests.

By continuously learning and applying these sophisticated techniques, you can unlock the maximum efficiency and analytical potential of Excel for all your demanding data requirements.