

## Merging Excel Data Columns

This short guide will show you how to merge / combine two data columns in an Excel spreadsheet.

1.) Here's an example of what we want to accomplish. My plan is to combine the area codes column with the phone numbers column into a single column. I also want to insert a dash after the area code.



	A	B
1	<b>Area Code</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
2	509	555-1111
3	253	555-2222
4	425	555-3333
5	206	555-4444
6	360	555-5555
7		

	A
1	<b>Phone Number</b>
2	509-555-1111
3	253-555-2222
4	425-555-3333
5	206-555-4444
6	360--555-5555
7	

2.) My first step is entering a formula which combines the cells. In cell **C2**, I type `=A2&"-"&B2`. The "-" means to insert a dash between the entries in my two columns, as they're combined.

After entering the formula, I can click on any other cell, and the new phone number will appear in cell **C2**, as shown below.

	A	B	C
1	<b>Area Code</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	
2	509	555-1111	<code>=A2&amp;"-"&amp;B2</code>
3	253	555-2222	
4	425	555-3333	
5	206	555-4444	
6	360	555-5555	
7			

3.) Now I right-click on the fill handle of cell **C2**. I drag it to the last cell in column **C** which is in the same row as the last data in my first two columns, row **6** in this example.

	A	B	C
1	<b>Area Code</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	
2	509	555-1111	509-555-1111
3	253	555-2222	
4	425	555-3333	
5	206	555-4444	
6	360	555-5555	
7			

4.) When I let go of the mouse button after dragging the fill handle, the formula is extended to the rest of the cells in the range **C2-C6**, and automatically fills each cell with the converted phone number dictated by the formula. The spreadsheet looks like this with the new column:

	A	B	C
1	<b>Area Code</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	
2	509	555-1111	509-555-1111
3	253	555-2222	253-555-2222
4	425	555-3333	425-555-3333
5	206	555-4444	206-555-4444
6	360	555-5555	360-555-5555

5.) Although I've succeeded in creating combined numbers for these phones, I'm not finished. I want to eliminate the original columns, but my new numbers are still dependent on them, as you can see from the derivation in the Formula Bar for cell **C4**.

	A	B	C
1	<b>Area Code</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	
2	509	555-1111	509-555-1111
3	253	555-2222	253-555-2222
4	425	555-3333	425-555-3333
5	206	555-4444	206-555-4444

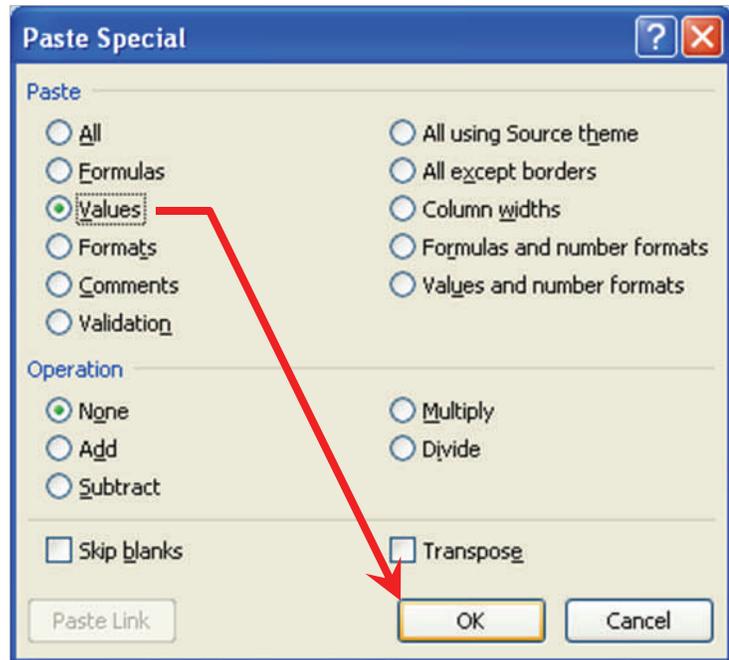
6.) My next step is to select the cells I've just created, by left-clicking in the first one, and dragging my cursor to the last before releasing. Then I'll right-click with my cursor hovering over the selected cell range, and click on **C**opy in the resulting dialog box.

	A	B	C
1	<b>Area Code</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	
2	509	555-1111	509-555-1111
3	253	555-2222	253-555-2222
4	425	555-3333	425-555-3333
5	206	555-4444	206-555-4444
6	360	555-5555	360-555-5555

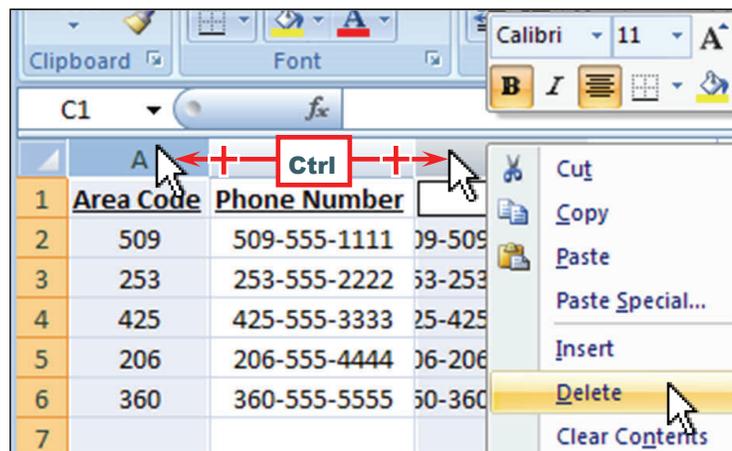
7.) I now have cells **C2-C6** copied to my clipboard. I'm going to select the equivalent cells in column **B**, already labeled **Phone Number**, and transfer the information there. Again, I right-click over the **B2-B6** range, but this time I'll select **Paste Special...**

	A	B	C
1	<b>Area Code</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	
2	509	555-1111	509-555-1111
3	253	555-2222	253-555-2222
4	425	555-3333	425-555-3333
5	206	555-4444	206-555-4444
6	360	555-5555	360-555-5555

8.) The **Paste Special** dialog box opens up. I'll copy *only the text* of the transformed phone numbers, by clicking on the "**V**alues" radio button, then clicking on **OK**.



9.) The new numbers have been copied to column **B**. I'll now delete the duplicate information in column **C**, as well as the original column **A**. I select them by clicking in the column headings containing the letters **A** and **C**, while holding down the **Ctrl** key. Then a right-click brings up the dialog box, so that I can select the **Delete** choice.



10.) Here's my final version, with the ZIP codes and local phone numbers combined into one column, and no underlying formula, as can be seen by comparing the contents of, say, cell **A6** with the same cell's description in the Name Box and Formula Bar (compare with item **5.**) above).

