



Introduction

One of the many features of Excel is by default to remove a leading zero at the beginning of a number string. This may seem helpful but there are times when the leading zero is necessary and turning the column into a text string will not allow the numbers to be manipulated. Follow these instructions to keep a leading zero in a column in a numeric format.

Process Summary

Select Column

Change the Format

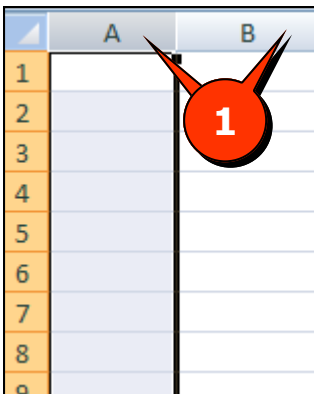
Select the Column

Either click and drag to select specific cells or select the entire column or columns you want to change.

1. Click on the top of the column heading (Fig 1, 1) to select the entire column.

- Hold down the Ctrl key and click to select more than one column.

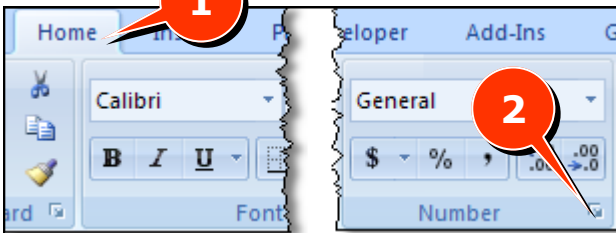
Figure 1



Change the Format

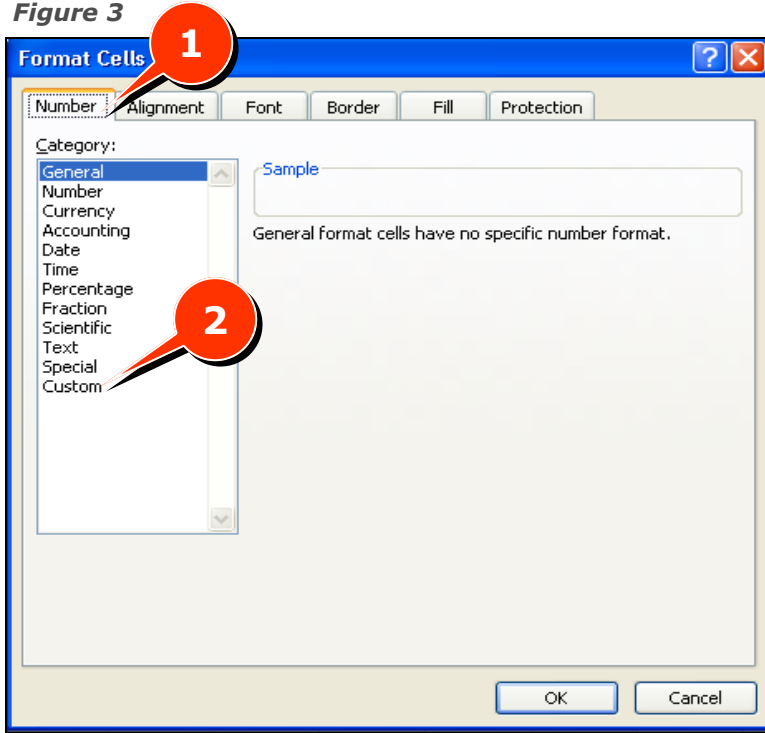
1. On the **Home** tab of the Ribbon (Fig 2, 1), click the **arrow** next to the **Number** group (Fig 2, 2)

Figure 2




2. Make sure the **Number** tab is selected (Fig 3, 1).
3. Click **Custom** under **Category:** (Fig 3, 2).

Figure 3



4. In the text box under **Type:** type in **0 (zero)** and then the number of # symbols that equals the longest number in the selection. For example if I have a column of numbers and the longest number I have is five digits long, I would type in 0##### (Fig 4, 1).

 There are also other default formats here that you can select for other tasks such as adding a comma, decimal point, date/time formats, etc.

5. Click **OK** (Fig 4, 2).


 This can be done to a column with existing data or to a blank column. A zero will be added to the front of the number string (Fig 5).

Figure 5

A
023456456
01546489496
0145648
0489789
0489789
044
07478
0893456

Figure 4

