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## Identity column in SQL Server - Part 7

If a column is marked as an identity column, then the values for this column are automatically generated, when you insert a new row into the table. The following, create table statement marks PersonId as an identity column with seed = 1 and Identity Increment = 1. Seed and Increment values are optional. If you don't specify the identity and seed they both default to 1.



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### Identity Column in SQL Server -...



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Create Table tblPerson

```
(  
PersonId int Identity(1,1) Primary Key,  
Name nvarchar(20)  
)
```

In the following 2 insert statements, we only supply values for Name column and not for PersonId column.

```
Insert into tblPerson values ('Sam')
```

```
Insert into tblPerson values ('Sara')
```

If you select all the rows from tblPerson table, you will see that, 'Sam' and 'Sara' rows have got 1 and 2 as PersonId.

Now, if I try to execute the following query, I get an error stating - **An explicit value for the identity column in table 'tblPerson' can only be specified when a column list is used and IDENTITY\_INSERT is ON.**

```
Insert into tblPerson values (1,'Todd')
```

So if you mark a column as an Identity column, you dont have to explicitly supply a value for that column when you insert a new row. The value is automatically calculated and provided by SQL server. So, to insert a row into tblPerson table, just provide value for Name column.

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[Insert into tblPerson values \('Todd'\)](#)

Delete the row, that you have just inserted and insert another row. You see that the value for PersonId is 2. Now if you insert another row, PersonId is 3. A record with PersonId = 1, does not exist, and I want to fill this gap. To do this, we should be able to explicitly supply the value for identity column. To explicitly supply a value for identity column

1. First turn on identity insert - [SET Identity\\_Insert tblPerson ON](#)

2. In the insert query specify the column list

[Insert into tblPerson\(PersonId, Name\) values\(2, 'John'\)](#)

As long as the Identity\_Insert is turned on for a table, you need to explicitly provide the value for that column. If you don't provide the value, you get an error - **Explicit value must be specified for identity column in table 'tblPerson1' either when IDENTITY\_INSERT is set to ON or when a replication user is inserting into a NOT FOR REPLICATION identity column.**

After, you have the gaps in the identity column filled, and if you wish SQL server to calculate the value, turn off Identity\_Insert.

[SET Identity\\_Insert tblPerson OFF](#)

If you have deleted all the rows in a table, and you want to reset the identity column value, use DBCC CHECKIDENT command. This command will reset PersonId identity column.

[DBCC CHECKIDENT\(tblPerson, RESEED, 0\)](#)

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**KHAN** January 23, 2013 at 2:40 PM

GREAT LECTURE !!!!

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** July 12, 2013 at 7:38 AM

if i have 3 rows with id 1 2 3 , i delete row with id 2 , i wanna it automaticlly to add id 2 on the next insert , is is possible ?  
(without SET Identity\_Insert )

[Reply](#)

Replies



**Venkat** July 12, 2013 at 11:16 AM

Nope, to my knowledge, you have to use Identity\_Insert, and have to specify the value you want to insert.

---

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**Anonymous** September 29, 2013 at 4:13 AM

when try to xecute this query shows error

```
DBCC CHECKIDENT("tblItem", RESEED,0)
```

Incorrect DBCC statement. Check the documentation for the correct DBCC syntax and options

Reply

#### Replies

**Anonymous** October 21, 2013 at 5:32 PM

Remove the double quotes for table name and try...



**prafull goswami** July 20, 2014 at 11:45 PM

First Check Your Spelling . it is CHECKIDENT not CHECKINDENT and also remove double quotes from tablename



**payal varia** November 14, 2014 at 10:18 PM

Instead of double quotes use single quotes

```
DBCC CHECKIDENT('tblItem', RESEED,0)
```

**Anonymous** January 30, 2017 at 10:42 PM

Correct syntax is

```
DBCC CHECKIDENT(tblItem, RESEED, 0)
```

Changes mad are:-

1. Its CHECKIDENT and not CHECKINDENT
2. no single or double codes should be there while giving table name.

Thanks

---

**Reply**

**Esteban Quijada Suazo** October 16, 2013 at 7:16 AM

Hi  
taking the example you gave  
Create Table tblPerson  
(  
PersonId int Primary Key,  
Name nvarchar(20)  
)  
and then would like to add identity as well  
Alter table tblPerson  
add id int identity  
But fail, help please and sorry but Latin and not much English

**Reply**

**Replies**



**himanshu pareek** January 13, 2014 at 6:27 PM

This comment has been removed by the author.



**raju** August 2, 2016 at 2:17 AM

Hi Esteban ...

First Created Table

```
Create Table tblPerson  
(  
  PersonId int Primary Key,  
  Name nvarchar(20)  
)
```

Now if u want to alter the PersonId column ,, first u need to drop the PersonId bcoz u cannot alter the Primary key column,,since it is a primary key u cannot drop the PersonId directly..

So first u need to drop the Index that is generated by default for the PersonId Primary key column ..

To drop the Index .. expand the table name tblPerson.. then expand the Indexes folder..  
Now Right click on the Index Name and select delete option and click ok..

So now the index that is associated with the Primary key column got deleted..

Now to delete the primary key column .. use the below code...

```
alter table tblPerson  
drop column PersonId
```

Now u can see only the name column as shown below..

```
select * from tblPerson  
  
Name  
----  
(0 row(s) affected)
```

Now add the column again with ur requirements (making identity column)..



```
alter table tblPerson  
add PersonId int primary key identity
```

Now u can see two columns..

```
select * from tblPerson
```

Name PersonId  
-----

(0 row(s) affected)

So now the PersonId is the Primary key identity column...



**pathuri priyanka** March 20, 2018 at 10:06 PM

Hi

I'm trying to drop my index before drop the primary key column.  
but delete option hided on the menu.

---

**Reply**

**Anonymous** February 20, 2014 at 12:18 PM

```
USE test  
GO  
DBCC CHECKIDENT (tblPerson, RESEED, 5)  
GO
```

**Reply**

**Anonymous** January 18, 2015 at 8:59 AM

i have set identity(1,5) by mistake  
how do i alter it to identity(5,1) via sql command

**Reply**

## Replies



**raju** August 2, 2016 at 2:28 AM

create the table..

```
create table tblPers
(
  Id int Identity(1,5),
  Name varchar(20)
)
```

Hi since Id here, is an identity column .. u cannot alter the Identity column directly,, so first u need to drop it and then add the Id column again as shown below...

drop the column

```
alter table tblPers
drop column Id
```

Add the column again

```
alter table tblPers
add Id int identity(5,1)
```

I hope u got the answer..

---

## Reply

**Anonymous** February 1, 2015 at 9:05 PM

You can't alter the existing columns for identity.

You have 2 options,

Create a new table with identity & drop the existing table

Create a new column with identity & drop the existing column

Alter Table Names Drop Column ID

Go

[Reply](#)



**imteyaz Ashraf** February 8, 2016 at 6:30 AM

Good Job Sir thank you very much.

I have a question can i have identity column like A001 and increment by 1.

[Reply](#)

Replies



**shihab rashel** August 28, 2016 at 3:29 AM

To my Knowledge I think u can't because column identity is only applicable for integer valued column

---

[Reply](#)



**Vipul Pathak** July 27, 2017 at 10:40 AM

In an interview interviewer asked me if we do not declare identity column as primary key, then there is any problem

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** September 21, 2017 at 4:20 AM

Even Truncate sets the identity to zero by deleting all records from table

[Reply](#)

**Anonymous** May 27, 2019 at 10:34 PM

DBCC CHECKIDENT('tblPerson', RESEED, 0)----correct one

[Reply](#)

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