

PHP Date and Time

In this tutorial you will learn how to extract or format the date and time in PHP.

The PHP Date() Function

The PHP `date()` function convert a timestamp to a more readable date and time.

The computer stores dates and times in a format called UNIX Timestamp, which measures time as a number of seconds since the beginning of the Unix epoch (midnight Greenwich Mean Time on January 1, 1970 i.e. January 1, 1970 00:00:00 GMT).

Since this is an impractical format for humans to read, PHP converts a timestamp to a format that is readable to humans and dates from your notation into a timestamp the computer understands. The syntax of the PHP `date()` function can be given with.

```
date(format, timestamp)
```

The *format* parameter in the `date()` function is required which specifies the format of returned date and time. However the *timestamp* is an optional parameter, if not included then current date and time will be used. The following statement displays today's date:

Example

[Run this code »](#)

```
<?php
$today = date("d/m/Y");
echo $today;
?>
```

Note: The PHP `date()` function return the current date and time according to the built-in clock of the web server on which the script has been executed.

Formatting the Dates and Times with PHP

The format parameter of the `date()` function is in fact a string that can contain multiple characters allowing you to generate a date string containing various components of the date and time, like day of the week, AM or PM, etc. Here are some the date-related formatting characters that are commonly used in format string:

- d - Represent day of the month; two digits with leading zeros (01 or 31)

- D - Represent day of the week in text as an abbreviation (Mon to Sun)
- m - Represent month in numbers with leading zeros (01 or 12)
- M - Represent month in text, abbreviated (Jan to Dec)
- y - Represent year in two digits (08 or 14)
- Y - Represent year in four digits (2008 or 2014)

The parts of the date can be separated by inserting other characters, like hyphens (-), dots (.), slashes (/), or spaces to add additional visual formatting.

Example	Run this code »
<pre><?php echo date("d/m/Y") . "
"; echo date("d-m-Y") . "
"; echo date("d.m.Y"); ?></pre>	

Tip: You can use the PHP date() function to automatically update the copyright duration on your website, like: Copyright © 2010-<?php echo date("Y")?>.

Similarly you can use the following characters to format the time string:

- h - Represent hour in 12-hour format with leading zeros (01 to 12)
- H - Represent hour in 24-hour format with leading zeros (00 to 23)
- i - Represent minutes with leading zeros (00 to 59)
- s - Represent seconds with leading zeros (00 to 59)
- a - Represent lowercase ante meridiem and post meridiem (am or pm)
- A - Represent uppercase Ante meridiem and Post meridiem (AM or PM)

The PHP code in the following example displays the date in different formats:

Example	Run this code »
<pre><?php echo date("h:i:s") . "
"; echo date("F d, Y h:i:s A") . "
"; echo date("h:i a"); ?></pre>	

The PHP time() Function

The `time()` function is used to get the current time as a Unix timestamp (the number of seconds since the beginning of the Unix epoch: January 1 1970 00:00:00 GMT).

Example	Run this code »
<pre><?php // Executed at March 05, 2014 07:19:18 \$timestamp = time(); echo(\$timestamp); ?></pre>	

The above example produce the following output.

1394003958

We can convert this timestamp to a human readable date through passing it to the previously introduce `date()` function.

Example	Run this code »
<pre><?php \$timestamp = 1394003958; echo(date("F d, Y h:i:s", \$timestamp)); ?></pre>	

The above example produce the following output.

March 05, 2014 07:19:18

The PHP mktime() Function

The `mktime()` function is used to create the timestamp based on a specific date and time. If no date and time is provided, the timestamp for the current date and time is returned.

The syntax of the `mktime()` function can be given with:

```
mktime(hour, minute, second, month, day, year)
```

The following example displays the timestamp corresponding to 3:20:12 pm on May 10, 2014:

Example	Run this code »
<pre><?php // Create the timestamp for a particular date</pre>	

```
echo mktime(15, 20, 12, 5, 10, 2014);  
?>
```

The above example produce the following output.

1399735212

Note: You can leave out as many arguments as you like, and the value corresponding to the current time will be used instead. If you omit all the arguments, the `mktime()` function will return the UNIX timestamp corresponding to the current date and time, just like `time()`.

The `mktime()` function can be used to find the weekday name corresponding to a particular date. To do this, simply use the 'l' (lowercase 'L') character with your timestamp, as in the following example, which displays the day that falls on April 1, 2014:

Example

[Run this code »](#)

```
<?php  
// Get the weekday name of a particular date  
echo date('l', mktime(0, 0, 0, 4, 1, 2014));  
?>
```

The above example produce the following output.

Tuesday

The `mktime()` function can also be used to find a particular date in future after a specific time period. As in the following example, which displays the date which falls on after 30 month from the current date?

Example

[Run this code »](#)

```
<?php  
// Executed at March 05, 2014  
$futureDate = mktime(0, 0, 0, date("m")+30, date("d"), date("Y"));  
echo date("d/m/Y", $futureDate);  
?>
```

The above example produce the following output.

05/09/2016

Complete PHP Date Reference

Please check out the [PHP Date/Time Functions](#) reference section for a complete list of all the useful date and time functions available in PHP.