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# Word-wrap in an HTML table

Asked 10 years, 3 months ago Active 2 months ago Viewed 678k times

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I've been using `word-wrap: break-word` to wrap text in `div`s and `span`s. However, it doesn't seem to work in table cells. I have a table set to `width:100%`, with one row and two columns. Text in columns, although styled with the above `word-wrap`, doesn't wrap. It causes the text to go past the bounds of the cell. This happens on Firefox, Google Chrome and Internet Explorer.

Here's what the source looks like:

```
td {
    border: 1px solid;
}

<table style="width: 100%;">
  <tr>
    <td>
      <div style="word-wrap: break-word;">
        Loooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo
      </div>
    </td>
    <td><span style="display: inline;">Short word</span></td>
  </tr>
</table>
```

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The long word above is larger than the bounds of my page, but it doesn't break with the above HTML. I've tried the suggestions below of adding `text-wrap: suppress` and `text-wrap: normal`, but neither helped.

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edited Jan 20 at 16:58



Mark Amery

82.9k • 38 • 290 • 335

asked Aug 11 '09 at 4:01



psychotik

32.9k • 32 • 89 • 134

add hard-hyphen. `<tr> <td style="text-wrap: normal; word-wrap: break-word"> This is a pre-sentation. </td> </tr>` – [adatapost](#) Aug 11 '09 at 6:27

Unfortunately, the text in there comes from user-generated content. Of course, I could pre-process it and add the hyphen, but I was hoping there would be a better way. – [psychotik](#) Aug 11 '09 at 6:36

I apologize for using word 'hard-hyphen'. In HTML, the plain hyphen is represented by the "-" character (&#45; or &#xD;) The soft hyphen is represented by the character entity reference &shy; (&#173; or &#xAD;) – [adatapost](#) Aug 11 '09 at 6:58

Are you really using `<code>break-wor<em>k</em></code>`? Maybe that could have something to do with it. – [Ms2ger](#) Aug 11 '09 at 9:15

<sup>1</sup> If you're here you might want to also look at `white-space: pre-wrap` [developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/CSS/white-space](#) – [Tom Prats](#) Aug 5 '14 at 15:43

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The following works for me in Internet Explorer. Note the addition of the `table-layout:fixed` CSS attribute

```
td {  
    border: 1px solid;  
}  
  
<table style="table-layout: fixed; width: 100%">  
    <tr>  
        <td style="word-wrap: break-word">  
            LongLongLongLongLongLongLongLongLongLongLongLongLongLongLongLongLongLong  
        </td>  
    </tr>  
</table>
```

[Run code snippet](#)

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edited May 29 '15 at 23:34



Ruslan López  
3,446 • 1 • 16 • 29

answered Dec 10 '09 at 20:15



Marc Stober  
8,274 • 2 • 22 • 31

@ewomac yeah, sometimes I just have to ignore the VS2010 errors about HTML/CSS if I know it will work in the browser. – [Marc Stober](#) Aug 11 '11 at 16:19

2 @marc!! dude, thanks so much for this. I was tasked with building a mobile version of a client site that uses tables, and i was having trouble getting this to work! `table-layout:fixed` did the trick! – [debug](#) Sep 14 '11 at 21:47

14 This makes the other columns much too wide. – [Clément](#) Dec 13 '11 at 10:55 ↗

1 @Clément see Indrek's answer below about `<colgroup>`, it fixed this for me. – [andrewtweber](#) Dec 29 '14 at 21:46

1 it works fine, but makes all column width as same – [sainu](#) Apr 5 '17 at 7:53

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▲

`<td style="word-break:break-all;">longtextwithoutspace</td>`

152

or

`<span style="word-break:break-all;">longtextwithoutspace</span>`

share improve this answer

answered Oct 8 '09 at 17:01



Pratik Stephen  
1,605 • 1 • 9 • 10

Can confirm that Pratik's approach works on Safari on iOS (iPhone) too. – [occulus](#) Mar 24 '11 at 14:43

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To work around the problem with some short and some long words, you could potentially preprocess the text and wrap only long words (say, > 40 chars) in the `<span>`. – [nomagon](#) Jun 2 '11 at 8:30

9 this don't support by firefox, opera – [meotimdihiia](#) Jul 8 '11 at 22:24

4 this didn't preferentially break on non-word characters (like, if I had a series of shorter words separated by spaces it would always run the words right up to the line, then break the last word in half). Word-wrap will break words only when necessary – [Hashbrown](#) Mar 7 '16 at 0:31

1 update on @meotimdihiia: it works on firefox now. – [Likak](#) Jul 30 '18 at 20:32 ↗

[show 1 more comment](#)

▲ A long shot, but double-check with [Firebug](#) (or similar) that you aren't accidentally inheriting the following rule:

120

```
white-space:nowrap;
```

This may override your specified line break behaviour.

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edited Jun 2 '14 at 18:43



Peter Mortensen

24.2k • 19 • 89 • 118

answered Aug 11 '09 at 5:00



Rick Grundy

1,297 • 1 • 7 • 5

This is what was inherited and broke the word wrapping for me – [shane lee](#) Feb 7 '13 at 10:55

@RickGrundy What do you change it to if you have that issue? – [cokedude](#) Jun 30 '14 at 16:02

6 @cokedude I'm way too late here, but it's `white-space:normal;` – [Beer Me](#) Jan 20 '16 at 19:30

[add a comment](#)

▲ Turns out there's no good way of doing this. The closest I came is adding "overflow:hidden;" to the div around the table and losing the text. The real solution seems to be to ditch table though. Using divs and relative positioning I was able to achieve the same effect, minus the legacy of `<table>`

44

▼ 2015 UPDATE: This is for those like me who want this answer. After 6 years, this works, thanks to all the contributors.

```
* { // this works for all but td
  word-wrap:break-word;
}
```

```
table { // this somehow makes it work for td
  table-layout:fixed;
  width:100%;
}
```

[share](#) [improve this answer](#)

edited Sep 19 '15 at 18:39



Wes Foster

7,656 • 3 • 28 • 51

answered Aug 12 '09 at 0:08



psychotik

32.9k • 32 • 89 • 134

[add a comment](#)

▲ As mentioned, putting the text within `div` almost works. You just have to specify the `width` of the `div`, which is fortunate for layouts which are static.

29

▼ This works on FF 3.6, IE 8, Chrome.

```
<td>
```

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```
<div style="width: 442px; word-wrap: break-word">
    <!-- Long Content Here-->
</div>
</td>
```

share improve this answer

edited Jan 20 at 17:46

 Mark Amery  
82.9k • 38 • 290 • 335

answered Apr 10 '11 at 5:14

 loungerdork  
921 • 11 • 13

- 2 You can add `min-width: 100%` along with `width` to ensure the `div` takes up the entire cell. – user1091949 Feb 16 '16 at 8:24

I want to do word wrap with comma (,) Like Long,Long,Long,Long,Long . I want to wrap this by after any comma (,) . – Karthikeyan Apr 9 at 9:30

add a comment

## Workaround that uses overflow-wrap and works fine with normal table layout + table width 100%

18

<https://jsfiddle.net/krl0v6pw/>

HTML

```
<table>
  <tr>
    <td class="overflow-wrap-hack">
      <div class="content">
        wwwwwwwwwwww
      </div>
    </td>
  </tr>
</table>
```

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CSS

```
.content{
  word-wrap:break-word; /*old browsers*/
  overflow-wrap:break-word;
}

table{
  width:100%; /*must be set (to any value)*/
}

.overflow-wrap-hack{
  max-width:1px;
}
```

Benefits:

- Uses `overflow-wrap:break-word` instead of `word-break:break-all` . Which is better because it tries to break on spaces first, and cuts the word off only if the word is bigger than its container.
- No `table-layout:fixed` needed. Use your regular auto-sizing.
- Not needed to define fixed `width` or fixed `max-width` in pixels. Define `%` of the parent if needed.

Tested in FF57, Chrome62, IE11, Safari11

share improve this answer

edited Jan 5 '18 at 22:08

answered Nov 23 '17 at 11:39

 Alph Dev

While this hack does in fact seem to work in all browsers, beware that the CSS spec provides no guarantee of this. Per [w3.org/TR/CSS21/visudet.html#propdef-max-width](#), "the effect of 'min-width' and 'max-width' on tables, inline tables, table cells, table columns, and column groups is undefined". – [Mark Amery](#) Jan 20 at 17:19

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### Change your code

17

`word-wrap: break-word;`

to

`word-break:break-all;`

### Example

```
<table style="width: 100%;>
  <tr>
    <td>
      <div style="word-break:break-all;">longtextwithoutspace longtextwithoutspace Long Con</div>
    </td>
    <td><span style="display: inline;">Short Content</span>
    </td>
  </tr>
</table>
```

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edited Jan 20 at 17:01

answered Apr 12 '16 at 2:39



Mark Amery  
82.9k • 38 • 290 • 335



Duc Nguyen  
386 • 2 • 6

-1; this makes the browser completely ignore word breaks and break in the middle of words even if it doesn't need to. That's rarely desirable behaviour and presumably not the behaviour that the OP wanted, or else they wouldn't've been using `break-word` in the first place. – [Mark Amery](#) Jan 20 at 17:05

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### Problem with

16

`<td style="word-break:break-all;">longtextwithoutspace</td>`

to

is that it will work not so good when text has some spaces, e.g.

```
<td style="word-break:break-all;">long text with andthenlongerwithoutspaces</td>
```

If `word andthenlongerwithoutspaces` fits into table cell in one line but `long text with andthenlongerwithoutspaces` does not, the long word will be broken in two, instead of being wrapped.

Alternative solution: insert U+200B ([ZWSP](#)), U+00AD ([soft hyphen](#)) or U+200C ([ZWNJ](#)) in every long word after every, say, 20th character (however, see warning below):

```
td {
    border: 1px solid;
}

<table style="width: 100%;">
<tr>
<td>
<div style="word-wrap: break-word;">
    Loooooooooooooooooooo&#xD;oooooooooooooooooooo&#xD;ooooooooooooo
</div>
</td>
<td><span style="display: inline;">Short word</span></td>
</tr>
</table>
```

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*Warning:* inserting additional, zero-length characters does not affect reading. However, it does affect text copied into clipboard (these characters are of course copied as well). If the clipboard text is later used in some search function in the web app... search is going to be broken. Although this solution can be seen in some well known web applications, avoid if possible.

*Warning:* when inserting additional characters, you should not separate multiple code points within grapheme. See [https://unicode.org/reports/tr29/#Grapheme\\_Cluster\\_Boundaries](https://unicode.org/reports/tr29/#Grapheme_Cluster_Boundaries) for more info.

share improve this answer

edited Jan 21 at 19:56

answered Feb 3 '11 at 9:57



Perhaps the output from this is slightly better if, in sufficiently long words, you insert a soft hyphen after every character, so that the browser can reliably break the word at the right-hand edge of the containing element. – [Mark Amery](#) Jan 20 at 18:06 ↗

While this is a viable solution, the seemingly innocuous suggestion to add something "after every, say, 20th character" is fraught with traps if you want to do it programmatically on your server. Iterating over the *characters* of a Unicode string is difficult in most programming languages. At best, a language may make it easy to iterate over Unicode code points, but those aren't necessarily what we'd want to refer to as "characters" (e.g. é may be written as two code points). We probably really mean "graphemes", but I don't know any language that makes it trivial to loop over those. – [Mark Amery](#) Jan 20 at 18:17 ↗

1 @MarkAmery you're right. However, even with plain ASCII this isn't great. I added "warnings". – [Piotr Findeisen](#) Jan 21 at 19:57

[add a comment](#)

 Tested in IE 8 and Chrome 13.

10

```
<table style="table-layout: fixed; width: 100%">
<tr>
<td>
<div style="word-wrap: break-word;">
    longtexthere
</div>
</td>
<td><span style="display: inline;">Foo</span></td>
</tr>
</table>
```

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This causes the table to fit the width of the page and each column to take up 50% of the width.

If you prefer the first column to take up more of the page, add a `width: 80%` to the `td` as in the

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If you prefer the first column to take up more of the page, add a width box to the `<td>` in the following example, replacing 80% with the percentage of your choice.

```
<table style="table-layout: fixed; width: 100%">
<tr>
    <td style="width:80%">
        <div style="word-wrap: break-word;">
            longtexthere
        </div>
    </td>
    <td><span style="display: inline;">Foo</span></td>
</tr>
</table>
```

share improve this answer

edited Jan 20 at 17:01



Mark Amery  
82.9k • 38 • 290 • 335

answered Aug 15 '11 at 20:23

Waylon Flinn  
17.2k • 11 • 62 • 69

add a comment

 The only thing that needs to be done is add width to the `<td>` or the `<div>` inside the `<td>` depending on the layout you want to achieve.

9

eg:

```
<table style="width: 100%; border="1"><tr>
<td><div style="word-wrap: break-word; width: 100px;">looooooooooooooodasdsdaasdasdasddddd
<td><span style="display: inline;">Foo</span></td>
</tr></table>
```

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edited Jan 20 at 17:02



Mark Amery  
82.9k • 38 • 290 • 335

answered Aug 16 '11 at 8:24

ShalomSam  
1,467 • 1 • 16 • 22

This basically just repeats what [loungerdork's answer](#) already said months earlier without adding any new information or insight. – [Mark Amery](#) Jan 20 at 17:53

add a comment

 Check out [this demo](#)

9

```
<table style="width: 100%;">
<tr>
    <td><div style="word-break:break-all;">LongWordLongWordLongWordLongWordLongWordLong
    </td>
    <td>
        <span style="display: inline;">Foo</span>
    </td>
</tr>
</table>
```

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edited Sep 24 at 12:53



Rishab

1,212 • 2 • 3 • 16

answered Aug 12 '11 at 6:21



abi1964

9,519 • 44 • 130 • 199

-1; using `break-all` will cause the browser to completely ignore word breaks when deciding where to put line breaks, with the effect that even if your cell contains normal prose without any very long words, you'll end up with line breaks in the middle of words. This is typically undesirable. – [Mark Amery](#) Jan 20 at 17:55

[add a comment](#)

 The answer that won the bounty is correct, but it doesn't work if the first row of the **table** has a **merged/joined cell** (all the cells get equal width).

8

In this case you should use the `colgroup` and `col` tags to display it properly:

```
<table style="table-layout: fixed; width: 200px">
<colgroup>
  <col style="width: 30%;">
  <col style="width: 70%;">
</colgroup>
<tr>
  <td colspan="2">Merged cell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
  <td style="word-wrap: break-word">VeryLongWordInThisCell</td>
  <td style="word-wrap: break-word">Cell 2</td>
</tr>
</table>
```

[share](#) [improve this answer](#)

answered Jan 11 '13 at 7:15



Indrek

5,408 • 4 • 25 • 27

[add a comment](#)

 `<p style="overflow:hidden; width:200px; word-wrap:break-word;">longtexthere</p>`

8

[share](#) [improve this answer](#)

edited Aug 25 '13 at 1:23



Cody Guldner

2,791 • 1 • 19 • 35

answered Jun 1 '11 at 9:44



Sarawut Positwinyu

4,119 • 12 • 43 • 66

-1 for both the lack of any explanation and the bad solution. Putting the content inside a fixed-pixel-width `p` within a table cell that *doesn't* have a fixed pixel width will almost certainly end up with the `p` either overflowing or failing to fill the table cell. – [Mark Amery](#) Jan 20 at 17:41

[add a comment](#)

 It appears you need to set `word-wrap:break-word;` on a block element (`div`), with specified (non relative) width. Ex:

8

```
<table style="width: 100%"><tr>
```

```
<td><div style="display:block; word-wrap: break-word; width: 40em;">oooooooooooooooooooo</div>
<td><span style="display: inline;">Foo</span></td>
</tr></table>
```

[Run code snippet](#) [Expand snippet](#)

or using `word-break:break-all` per Abhishek Simon's suggestion.

share improve this answer

edited Jan 20 at 17:34



Mark Amery  
82.9k • 38 • 290 • 335

answered Aug 24 '11 at 5:51



stslavik  
2,502 • 1 • 15 • 30

add a comment

This works for me:

5

```
<style type="text/css">
  td {
    /* CSS 3 */
    white-space: -o-pre-wrap;
    word-wrap: break-word;
    white-space: pre-wrap;
    white-space: -moz-pre-wrap;
    white-space: -pre-wrap;
  }
```

And table attribute is:

```
table {
  table-layout: fixed;
  width: 100%
}

</style>
```

share improve this answer

edited Jun 2 '14 at 18:39



Peter Mortensen  
24.2k • 19 • 89 • 118

answered May 20 '14 at 13:22



Lavekush Agrawal  
5,217 • 6 • 41 • 76

Like several other answers, the key bit here that makes it work is using `table-layout: fixed`, but there's already [a much older answer](#) suggesting that, so this answer doesn't add any new information. – [Mark Amery](#)  
Jan 20 at 17:32

add a comment

If you do not need a table border, apply this:

4

```
table{
  table-layout:fixed;
  border-collapse:collapse;
}
td{
  word-wrap: break-word;
}
```

share improve this answer

answered Dec 11 '15 at 13:43



Fusion  
3,182 • 4 • 17 • 26

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There's already a [much older answer](#) suggesting to use `table-layout: fixed`; this one doesn't add anything new to the page. – [Mark Amery](#) Jan 20 at 17:31

[add a comment](#)

Tables wrap by default, so make sure the display of the table cells are `table-cell`:

3

```
td {
    display: table-cell;
}
```

[share](#) [improve this answer](#)

edited Aug 11 '09 at 5:19

answered Aug 11 '09 at 4:10

 **ironsam**  
644 • 5 • 15

-1; text in *any* HTML element wraps by default, not just tables. The suggestion here doesn't really make any sense. – [Mark Amery](#) Jan 20 at 17:30

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I found a solution that seems to work in Firefox, Google Chrome and Internet Explorer 7-9. For doing a two-column table layout with long text on the one side. I searched all over for similar problem, and what worked in one browser broke the other, or adding more tags to a table just seems like bad coding.

3

I did NOT use a table for this. DL DT DD to the rescue. At least for fixing a two-column layout, that is basically a glossary/dictionary/word-meaning setup.

And some generic styling.

```
dl {
    margin-bottom:50px;
}

dl dt {
    background:#ccc;
    color:#fff;
    float:left;
    font-weight:bold;
    margin-right:10px;
    padding:5px;
    width:100px;
}

dl dd {
    margin:2px 0;
    padding:5px 0;
    word-wrap:break-word;
    margin-left:120px;
}

<dl>
    <dt>test1</dt>
    <dd>Fusce ultricies mi nec orci tempor sit amet</dd>
    <dt>test2</dt>
    <dd>Fusce ultricies</dd>
    <dt>longest</dt>
    <dd>
        Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur adipiscing ipsum dolor sit amet consectetur etiam elit. Nulla
    </dd>
```

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```
laoreet ante et turpis vulputate condimentum. In in elit nisl. Fusce ultricies  
mi nec orci tempor sit amet luctus dui convallis. Fusce viverra rutrum ipsum,  
in sagittis eros elementum eget. Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora  
torquent per conubia nostra, per  
</dd>  
</dl>
```

 Run code snippet

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Using floating word-wrap and margin-left, I got exactly what I needed. Just thought I'd share this with others, maybe it will help someone else with a two-column definition style layout, with trouble getting the words to wrap.

I tried using word-wrap in the table cell, but it only worked in Internet Explorer 9, (and Firefox and Google Chrome of course) mainly trying to fix the broken Internet Explorer browser here.

[share](#) [improve this answer](#)

edited Sep 24 at 14:29



Rishab

answered Feb 3 '12 at 15:35



Yogurt The Wise

1,212 ● 2 ● 3 ● 16

3,489 ● 4 ● 29 ● 38

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 style="table-layout:fixed; width:98%; word-wrap:break-word"

1

```
<table bgcolor="white" id="dis" style="table-layout:fixed; width:98%; word-wrap:break-word" border="1">
```

 Demo - <http://jsfiddle.net/Ne4BR/749/>

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This worked great for me. I had long links that would cause the table to exceed 100% on web browsers. Tested on IE, Chrome, Android and Safari.

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edited Jan 20 at 17:20



Mark Amery

answered Oct 1 '14 at 18:37



Bobby

82.9k

● 38

● 290

● 335

 This is basically a duplicate as the [top-voted answer](#); in both cases the solution boils down to "use table-layout: fixed". – [Mark Amery](#) Jan 20 at 17:21

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 A solution which works with Google Chrome and Firefox (not tested with Internet Explorer) is to set display: table-cell as a block element.

0

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edited Jun 2 '14 at 18:40



Peter Mortensen

answered Oct 10 '11 at 12:53



Antoine Guiral

24.2k

● 19

● 89

● 118

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