Finding and Replacing Text in File

The standard facility helps you find and replace text strings in the active editor.

In this section:

- Search in the current file
- Replace in the current file
- Working with search results
- Search and replace options
- Example. Finding and replacing a string using regular expression.

To find a text string in the current file

1. On the main menu, choose **Edit | Find | Find**, or press `Ctrl+F` or `Alt+F3`. The search pane appears on top of the active editor.

2. If necessary, specify the search options.

3. In the search field, start typing the search string:

   As you type, the first occurrence of the search string after the current cursor position is selected; the other occurrences are highlighted in the editor. In addition, the matching occurrences are marked in the right gutter with stripes.

4. Explore search results.
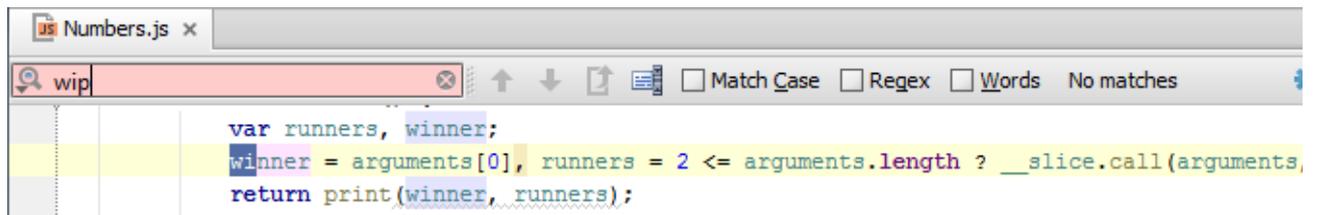
To replace a text string in the current file

1. On the main menu, choose **Edit | Find | Replace**, or press `Ctrl+R`. The search and replace pane appears on top of the active editor.

2. If necessary, specify the search and replace options.

3. In the search field, start typing the search string. As you type, the matching occurrences are highlighted in the editor, and a **Replace** pop-up dialog box opens at the first occurrence, suggesting you to replace the current occurrence, or all of them, with an empty string.

4. Start typing the replacement string.

5. Explore search results, and, using the buttons of the replace dialog box, replace occurrences as required. See Search and replace options below.

Working with search results

- To initiate a new search, do one of the following (depending on the current focus):

    - If the editor has the focus, press `Ctrl+F` or `Alt+F3`.

    - If the search field has the focus, press `Ctrl+A`

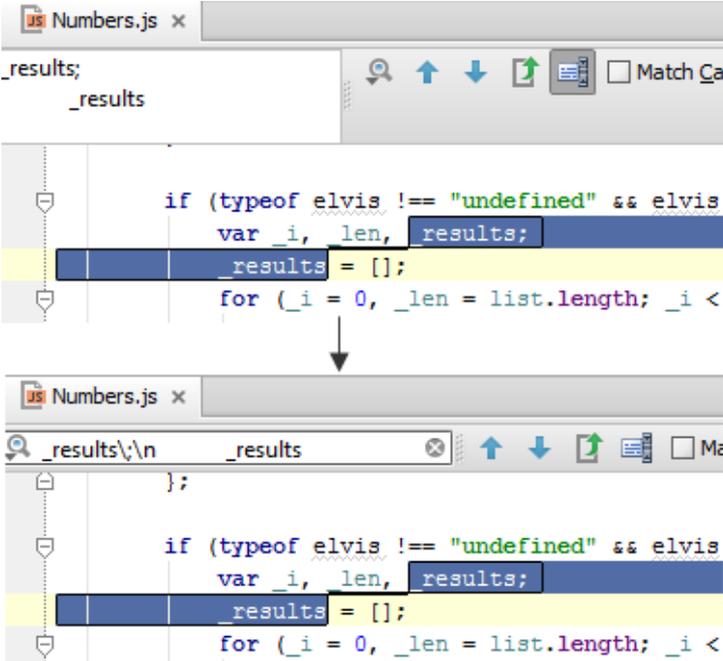   In both cases, the existing search string will be selected, and you can start typing a new one.

- To jump between occurrences, do one if the following:

    - Press `Shift+F3` or `Ctrl+Shift+L` or `F3` or `Ctrl+L`.

    - Use ⬆ or ⬇ buttons in the Search pane.

    - Click the gutter stripes.

- The search pane shows the number of found occurrences. If no matches are found, the search pane is red highlighted:

- Use Code completion in Find and Replace panes. Start typing the search string, press `Ctrl+Space`, and select the appropriate word from the suggestion list.

- Use the recent history of searches: with the search pane already open, click 🔍 to show the list of recent entries.

- With the search or replace pane already opened, use `Ctrl+R` or `Ctrl+F` or `Alt+F3` to toggle between panes. So doing, the search and replace strings are preserved.

- To cancel operation and close the pane, press `Escape`.

Search and replace options

Item	Description	Search/Replace
🔍	Click this button to show the history of the recent entries.	Search, replace
⊗	Click this button to clear the search field.	Search, replace
⬆ ⬇	Click these buttons to navigate through the occurrences of the search string.	Search, replace
↗	Click this button to show search results in the Find tool window.	Search, replace

Item	Description	Search/Replace
	Click this button to enable entering the search string in several lines. If this button is not pressed, you still can enter search strings that occupy several lines, but should work in the regular expression mode and use escape characters. For example: 	Search, replace
Match Case	If this check box is selected, IntelliJ IDEA will distinguish between upper and lowercase letters while searching.	Search, replace
Regex	If this check box is selected, the search string will be perceived as a regular expression, and the replacement preview is shown in a tooltip (Refer to the section Example).	Search, replace
Words	if this check box is selected, IntelliJ IDEA will search for whole words only, that is, for character strings separated with spaces, tabs, punctuation, or special characters. This check box is disabled, if the **Regular expressions** check box is selected.	Search, replace
Preserve Case	If this check box is selected, IntelliJ IDEA retains the case of the first letter and the case of the initial string in general. For example, *MyTest* will be replaced with *Yourtest* if you specify *yourtest* as the replacement. This check box is disabled, if **Regular expressions** check box is selected.	Replace
In Selection	If this check box is selected, search and replacement will be confined to the selected text only.	Replace

Item	Description	Search/Replace
Replace	Click this button to replace the current occurrence and proceed to the next one.	Replace
Replace all	Click this button the replace all found occurrences in the current file, or in the selection.	Replace
Exclude/Include	Click **Exclude** button to skip the current occurrence and exclude it from the **Replace all** operation. The button for this occurrence changes to **Include**.	Replace
⚙	Click this button to reveal the list of additional options: ■ **Comments only** - select this option to confine search to comments, ignoring the other occurrences. ■ **String literals only** - select this option to confine search to string literals, ignoring the other occurrences.	Search, replace

Example. Finding and replacing a string using regular expression.

Consider the following XML code fragment:

```
<new product="ij" category="105" title="Multiline search and replace in the current file" />
<new product="ij" category="105" title="Improved search and replace in the current file" />
<new product="ij" category="105" title="Regexp shows replacement preview" />
        ...
```
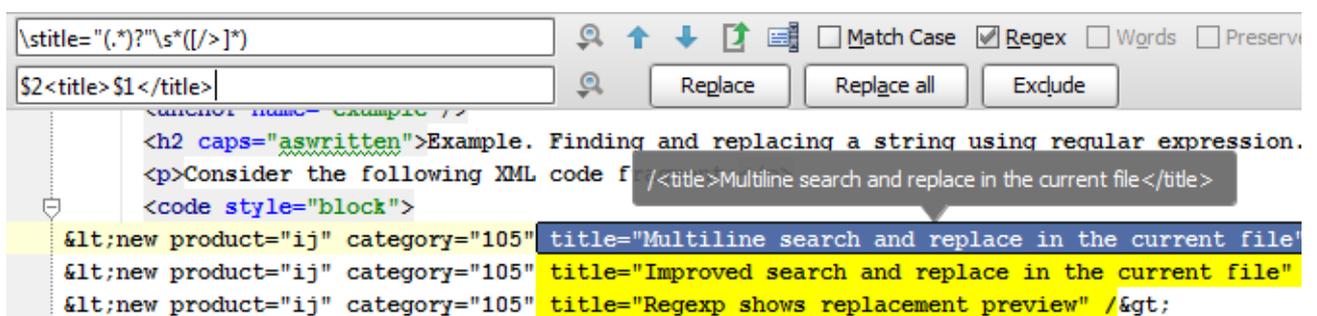
Suppose you want to replace an attribute within an element (`title`) with an expanded tag `<title></title>`, which contains some arbitrary string in double-quotes within.

This is how it's done.

1. With the XML file in question opened in the editor, press `Ctrl+R`. The **Replace** pane appears on top of the editor.

2. Since you want to replace all the `title` attributes, regardless of the actual strings contained therein, use regular expressions. Make sure that the check box **Regex** is selected. Thus everything you type in the **Search** and **Replace** fields will be perceived as the regular expressions.

3. In the **Search** field, start typing regular expression that describes all `title` attributes. Note that though the regular expression `\stitle=".*?"\s*[/>]*` matches contents of the `title` attribute, it is recommended to capture the groups for referencing them in the **Replace** field:

```
    \stitle="(.*)?"\s*(/>*)
```

Note that for the regular expressions replacement preview is shown at the tooltip.

4. Then, in the **Replace** field, type the following regular expression:

```
$2<title>$1</title>
```

5. Click **Replace**, or **Replace All**.

As you see, the second capture group (/>) is moved ahead to close the <new> element, while the first capture group <, which matches any string in double quotes, is moved to the element <title>.

See Also

Reference:

- [Regular Expression Syntax Reference](#)

Getting Started:

- [Familiarize Yourself with IntelliJ IDEA Editor](#)

Web Resources:

- [Developer Community](#) ⤢