

# How To: Install R and the *psych* package

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# 1 Overview of this and related documents

R is the lingua franca of statistics

R is an open source project guided by about 40 developers from around the world and is a framework for statistical analysis. In addition to core R there are at least 20,000 contributed packages that are meant for specific tasks. The *psych* package is one of these packages. It may be seen as a Swiss Army knife: not the best tool for anything, but a useful tool for many things.

To do basic and advanced personality and psychological research using R is not as complicated as some think. This is one of a set of “How To” to do various things using R (R Core Team, 2023), particularly using the *psych* (Revelle, 2024) package.

The current list of How To’s includes:

1. An [introduction](#) (vignette) of the *psych* package
2. An [overview](#) (vignette) of the *psych* package
3. [Installing R](#) and some useful packages
4. Using R and the *psych* package to find  $\omega_h$  and  $\omega_t$ .
5. Using R and the *psych* for [factor analysis](#) and principal components analysis.
6. Using the `scoreItems` function to find [scale scores and scale statistics](#).
7. Using `mediate` and `lmCor` to do [mediation, moderation and regression analysis](#).

By following these simple guides, you soon will be able to do such things as find  $\omega_h$  by issuing just three lines of code:

R code

```
library(psych)
my.data <- read.clipboard()
omega(my.data)
```

The resulting output will be both graphical and textual.

This guide helps the naive R user to issue those three lines. Be careful, for once you start using R, you will want to do more.

## 2 Install R and relevant packages

To use R obviously requires installing R on your computer. This is very easy to do (see section [2.1.1](#)) and needs to be done once.

The power of R is in the supplemental *packages*. There are at least 20,249 packages that have been contributed to the R project. To do any of the analyses discussed in these “How To’s”, you will

need to install the package *psych* (Revelle, 2024). To do factor analyses or principal component analyses you will also need the *GPArotation* (Bernaards and Jennrich, 2005) package. With these two packages, you will be able to find  $\omega_h$  using Exploratory Factor Analysis. If you want to estimate  $\omega_h$  using Confirmatory Factor Analysis, you will also need to add the *lavaan* (Rosseel, 2012) package. To use *psych* to create simulated data sets, you also need the *mnormt* (Azzalini and Genz, 2016) package. For a more complete installation of a number of psychometric packages, you can install and activate a package (*ctv*) that installs a large set of psychometrically relevant packages. As is true for R, you will need to install packages just once.

## 2.1 Install R for the first time

1. Download from R Cran (<https://cran.r-project.org/>) (see section 2.1.1)
  - Choose appropriate operating system and download compiled R
2. Install R (current version is 4.3.2)
3. Start R.

Note that the R prompt `>` starts off every line. This is R's way of indicating that it wants input. In addition, note that almost all commands start and finish with parentheses.

4. Add useful packages (just need to do this once) (see section 2.1.2)

```

R code
install.packages("psych",dependencies=TRUE) #the minimum requirement or
install.packages(c("psych","GPArotation"),dependencies=TRUE) #required for factor analysis

```

- (a) or if you want to do CFA

```

R code
install.packages(c("psych","lavaan"),dependencies=TRUE)

```

- (b) or if you want to install the psychometric task views using the *ctv* package (Zeileis et al., 2023).

```

R code
install.packages("ctv") #this downloads the task view package
library(ctv) #this activates the ctv package
install.views("Psychometrics") #among others

```

5. Take a 5 minute break while the packages are loaded.
6. Activate the package(s) you want to use (e.g., *psych*)

```

R code
library(psych) #Only need to make psych active once a session

```

*psych* will automatically activate the other packages it needs, as long as they are installed. Note that *psych* is updated roughly quarterly, the current version is 2.4.1

## 7. Use R

### 2.1.1 Install R

First go to the **Comprehensive R Archive Network (CRAN)** at <http://cran.r-project.org>: (Figure 1)

Choose your operating system and then download and install the appropriate version

For a PC: (Figure 2)

Download and install the appropriate version – Mac, PC or Unix/Linux

Starting R on a PC.

Once you have installed R you probably will want to download and install the **R Studio** (now known as Posit) program. It is a very nice interface for PCs and Macs that combines four windows into one screen.

When using a PC, RStudio is very helpful. (Many like it for Macs as well).



## The Comprehensive R Archive Network

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### Download and Install R

Precompiled binary distributions of the base system and contributed packages, **Windows and Mac** users most likely want one of these versions of R:

- [Download R for Linux](#) ([Debian](#), [Fedora/Redhat](#), [Ubuntu](#))
- [Download R for macOS](#)
- [Download R for Windows](#)

R is part of many Linux distributions, you should check with your Linux package management system in addition to the link above.

### Source Code for all Platforms

Windows and Mac users most likely want to download the precompiled binaries listed in the upper box, not the source code. The sources have to be compiled before you can use them. If you do not know what this means, you probably do not want to do it!

- The latest release (2023-10-31, Eye Holes) [R-4.3.2.tar.gz](#), read [what's new](#) in the latest version.
- Sources of [R alpha and beta releases](#) (daily snapshots, created only in time periods before a planned release).
- Daily snapshots of current patched and development versions are [available here](#). Please read about [new features and bug fixes](#) before filing corresponding feature requests or bug reports.
- Source code of older versions of R is [available here](#).
- Contributed extension [packages](#)

### Questions About R

- If you have questions about R like how to download and install the software, or what the license terms are, please read our [answers to frequently asked questions](#) before you send an email.

Figure 1: The basic CRAN window allows you choose your operating system. Comprehensive R Archive Network (CRAN) is found at <http://cran.r-project.org>:



## R for Windows

### Subdirectories:

[CRAN](#)  
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[Search](#)  
[CRAN Team](#)

[About R](#)  
[R Homepage](#)  
[The R Journal](#)

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<a href="#">base</a>	Binaries for base distribution. This is what you want to <b>install R for the first time</b> .
<a href="#">contrib</a>	Binaries of contributed CRAN packages (for R $\geq$ 3.4.x).
<a href="#">old contrib</a>	Binaries of contributed CRAN packages for outdated versions of R (for R $<$ 3.4.x).
<a href="#">Rtools</a>	Tools to build R and R packages. This is what you want to build your own packages on Windows, or to build R itself.

Please do not submit binaries to CRAN. Package developers might want to contact Uwe Ligges directly in case of questions / suggestions related to Windows binaries.

You may also want to read the [R FAQ](#) and [R for Windows FAQ](#).

Note: CRAN does some checks on these binaries for viruses, but cannot give guarantees. Use the normal precautions with downloaded executables.

Figure 2: On a PC you want to choose the base system



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## R-4.2.3 for Windows

[Download R-4.2.3 for Windows](#) (77 megabytes, 64 bit)

[README on the Windows binary distribution](#)

[New features in this version](#)

This build requires UCRT, which is part of Windows since Windows 10 and Windows Server 2016. On older systems, UCRT has to be installed manually from [here](#).

If you want to double-check that the package you have downloaded matches the package distributed by CRAN, you can compare the [md5sum](#) of the .exe to the [fingerprint](#) on the master server.

### Frequently asked questions

- [Does R run under my version of Windows?](#)
- [How do I update packages in my previous version of R?](#)

Please see the [R FAQ](#) for general information about R and the [R Windows FAQ](#) for Windows-specific information.

### Other builds

- A [pre-release](#) version for the forthcoming R-4.3.0 is available.
- Patches to this release are incorporated in the [r-patched snapshot build](#).
- A build of the development version (which will eventually become the next major release of R) is available in the [devel snapshot build](#).
- [Previous releases](#)

Note to webmasters: A stable link which will redirect to the current Windows binary release is <CRAN MIRROR>/bin/windows/base/release.html.

---

Last change: 2023-03-16

Figure 3: Download the Windows version

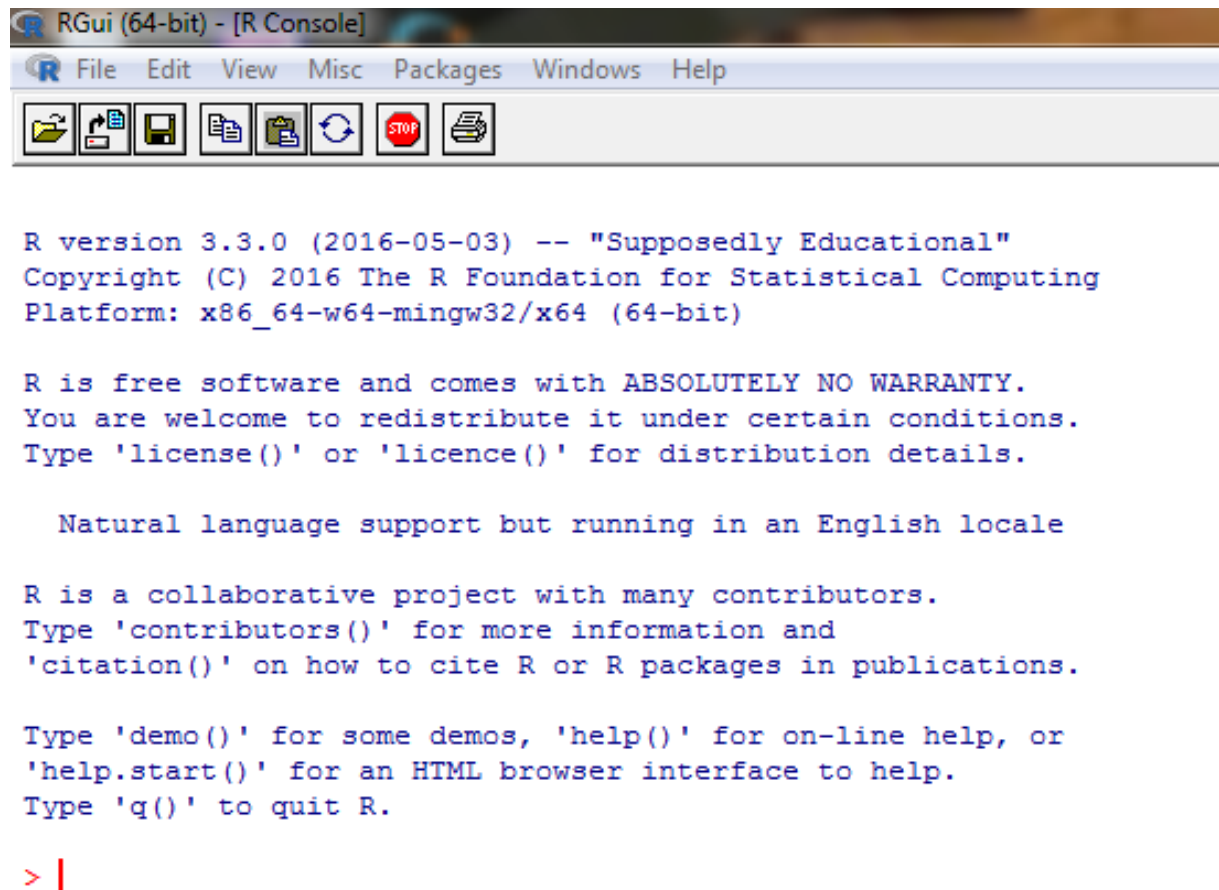


Figure 4: The startup screen for a PC (without R Studio) – older version of a PC



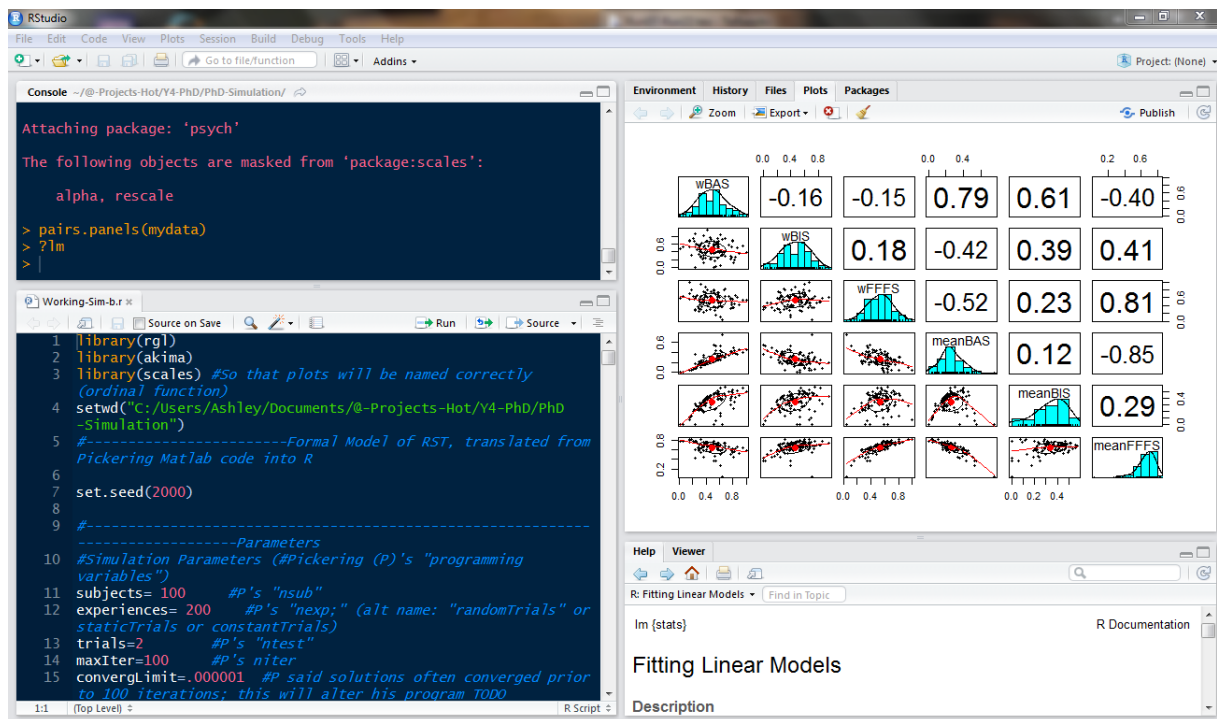


Figure 5: Using R Studio on a PC. The four windows are for your notes, the system console, graphics, and the help windows. The color choice is optional. Older version of a pc

Start up R and get ready to play (Mac version).

```
R version 4.3.2 (2023-10-31) -- "Eye Holes"  
Copyright (C) 2023 The R Foundation for Statistical Computing  
Platform: aarch64-apple-darwin20 (64-bit)
```

```
R is free software and comes with ABSOLUTELY NO WARRANTY.  
You are welcome to redistribute it under certain conditions.  
Type 'license()' or 'licence()' for distribution details.
```

```
Natural language support but running in an English locale
```

```
R is a collaborative project with many contributors.  
Type 'contributors()' for more information and  
'citation()' on how to cite R or R packages in publications.
```

```
Type 'demo()' for some demos, 'help()' for on-line help, or  
'help.start()' for an HTML browser interface to help.  
Type 'q()' to quit R.
```

```
[R.app GUI 1.80 (8281) aarch64-apple-darwin20]
```

```
[Workspace restored from /Users/WR/.RData]  
[History restored from /Users/WR/.Rapp.history]
```

## 2.1.2 Install relevant packages

Once R is installed on your machine, you still need to install a few relevant “packages”. Packages are what make R so powerful, for they are special sets of functions that are designed for one particular application. In the case of the *psych* package, this is an application for doing the kind of basic data analysis and psychometric analysis that psychologists and many others find particularly useful.

You may either install the minimum set of packages necessary to do the analysis using an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) approach (recommended) or a few more packages to do both an EFA and a CFA approach. It is also possible to add many psychometrically relevant packages all at once by using the “task views” approach. A particularly powerful package is the *lavaan* (Rosseel, 2012) package for doing structural equation modeling. Another useful one is the *sem* package (Fox et al., 2013).

**Install the minimum set** This may be done by typing into the console or using menu options (e.g., the Package Installer underneath the Packages and Data menu).

```
R code  
  
install.packages("psych", dependencies = TRUE) }
```

**Install a few more packages** If you want some more functionality for some of the more advanced statistical procedures (e.g., *omegaSem*) you will need to install a few more packages (e.g., *lavaan*).



## R for macOS

This directory contains binaries for the base distribution and of R and packages to run on macOS. R and package binaries for R versions older than 4.0.0 are only available from the [CRAN archive](#) so users of such versions should adjust the CRAN mirror setting (<https://cran-archive.r-project.org>) accordingly.

- [CRAN](#)
- [Mirrors](#)
- [What's new?](#)
- [Search](#)
- [CRAN Team](#)

Note: Although we take precautions when assembling binaries, please use the normal precautions with downloaded executables.

### R 4.3.2 "Eye Holes" released on 2023/10/31

- [About R](#)
- [R Homepage](#)
- [The R Journal](#)

Please check the integrity of the downloaded package by checking the signature:

```
pkgutil --check-signature R-4.3.2.pkg
```

in the *Terminal* application. If Apple tools are not available you can check the SHA1 checksum of the downloaded image:

```
openssl sha1 R-4.3.2.pkg
```

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### Latest release:

- [Documentation](#)
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- [Contributed](#)

For Apple silicon (M1/M2) Macs: **R 4.3.2** binary for macOS 11 (**Big Sur**) and higher, signed and notarized packages.

[R-4.3.2-arm64.pkg](#)

SHA1-  
hash: 763be9944ad00ed405972c73e9960ce4e55399d4  
(ca. 92MB, notarized and signed)

Contains R 4.3.2 framework, R.app GUI 1.80, Tcl/Tk 8.6.12 X11 libraries and Texinfo 6.8. The latter two components are optional and can be omitted when choosing "custom install", they are only needed if you want to use the `tc1tk` R package or build package documentation from sources.

- [Donations](#)
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For older Intel Macs:

[R-4.3.2-x86\\_64.pkg](#)

SHA1-  
hash: 3d68ea6698add258bd7a4a5950152f4072eece8b2  
(ca. 94MB, notarized and signed)

macOS Ventura users: there is a known bug in Ventura preventing installations from some locations without a prompt. If the installation fails, move the downloaded file away from the *Downloads* folder (e.g., to your home or Desktop)

Figure 6: For the Mac, you want to choose the latest version which includes the GUI as well as the 32 and 64 bit versions.

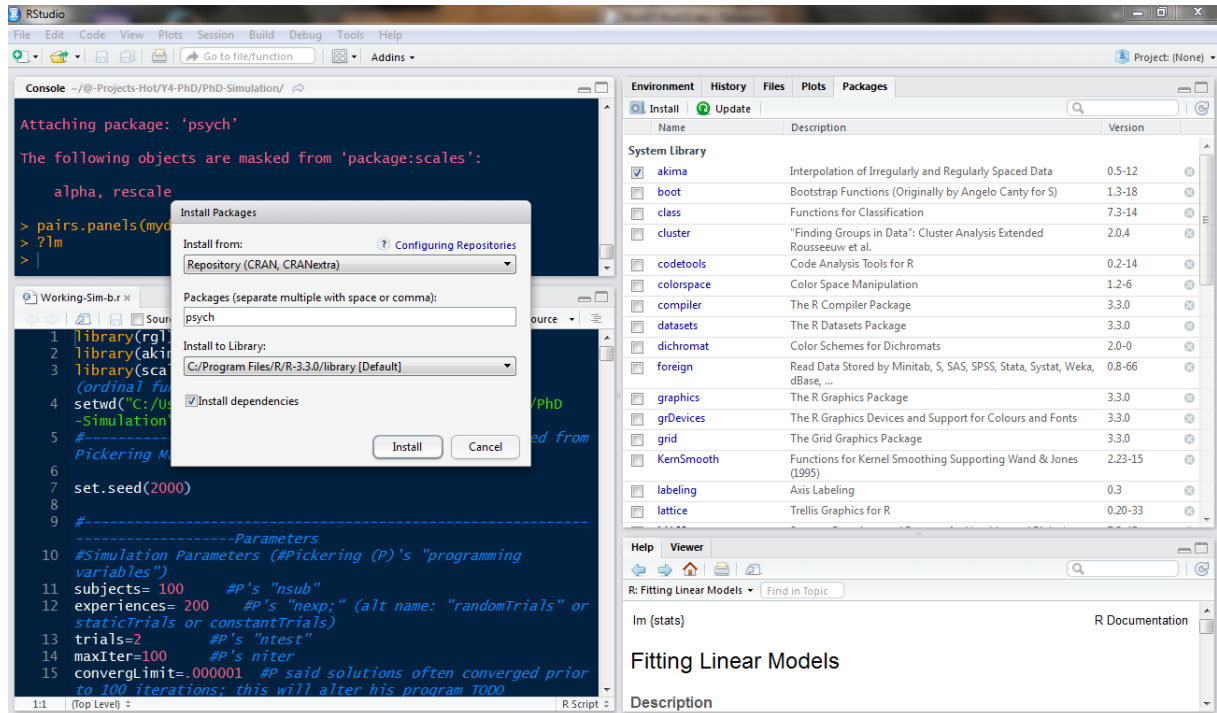


Figure 7: Installing packages using R studio on a PC. Use the install menu option. The right hand window is showing the installed packages. The Install Packages menu option allows you to search CRAN for the desired packages. Note that the Install Dependencies option has been checked.

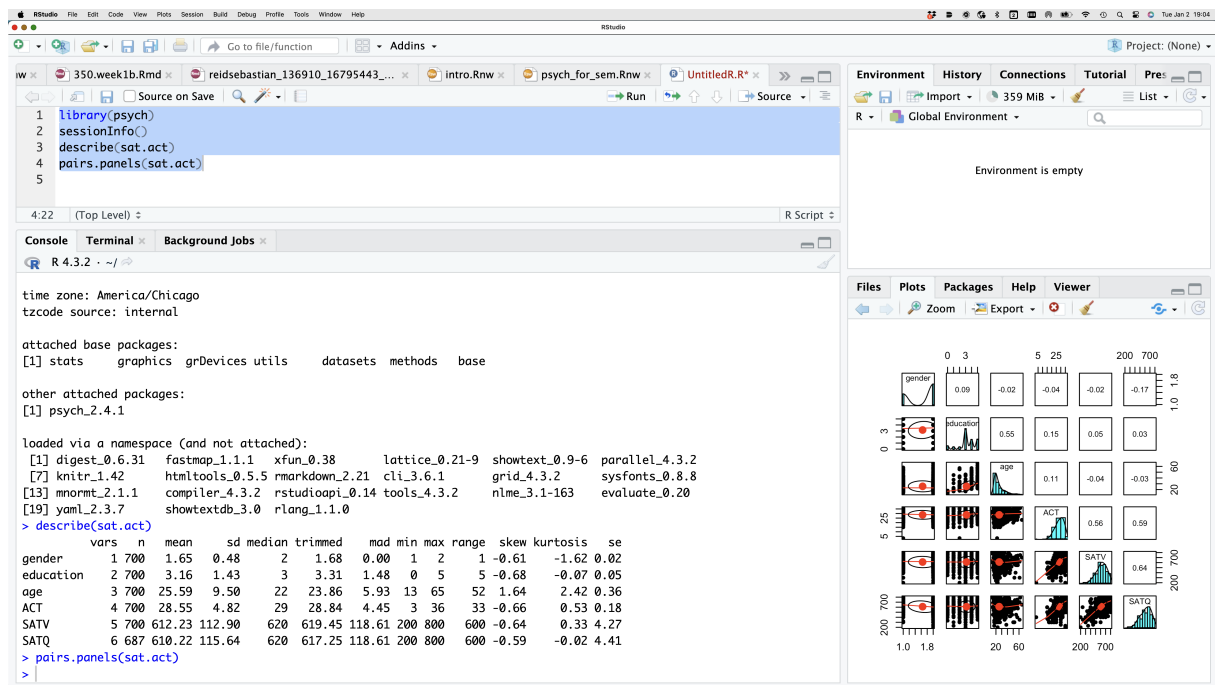


Figure 8: R Studio on a Mac. The upper left window shows your text file of commands, the lower left is the console. The upper right can be either your history file or allow you to inspect various objects. The lower right is the graphics output.

R code

```
install.packages(c("psych", "GPArotation", "lavaan"), dependencies=TRUE)
```

**Install a “task view” to get lots of packages** If you know that there are a number of packages that you want to use, it is possible they are listed as a “task view”. For instance, about 50 packages will be installed at once if you install the “psychometrics” task view. You can install all the psychometric packages from the “psychometrics” task view by first installing a package (“ctv”) that in turn installs many different task views. To see the list of possible task views, go to <https://cran.r-project.org/web/views/>.

R code

```
install.packages("ctv") }      #this downloads the task view package
library(ctv)                   #this activates the ctv package
install.views("Psychometrics") #one of the many Taskviews
```

Take a 5 minute break because you will be installing about 50 packages.

**Make the *psych* package active.** You are almost ready. But first, to use most of the following examples you need to make the *psych* package active. You only need to do this once per session.

R code

```
library(psych)
```

(If you want to automate this last step, you can create a special command to be run every time you start R.

R code

```
.First <- function() {library(psych)}
```

Do this when you first start R. Then quit with the save option. Then restart R. You will now automatically have loaded the *psych* package every time you start R.)

## 2.2 Seeing what packages are installed and active

To see what packages are active (as a way of telling which version of R you have, and which version of relevant packages are loaded):

R code

```
sessionInfo()
```

```
> sessionInfo()
R Under development (unstable) (2016-05-10 r70594)
Platform: x86_64-apple-darwin13.4.0 (64-bit)
Running under: OS X 10.11.4 (El Capitan)

locale:
[1] en_US.UTF-8/en_US.UTF-8/en_US.UTF-8/C/en_US.UTF-8/en_US.UTF-8
```

```

attached base packages:
[1] stats      graphics  grDevices  utils      datasets  methods   base

other attached packages:
[1] psych_1.6.4

loaded via a namespace (and not attached):
[1] tools_3.4.0    parallel_3.4.0  mnormt_1.5-4
>

```

## 3 Reading in the data for analysis

### 3.1 Find a file and read from it

There are of course many ways to enter data into R. Reading from a local file using `read.table` is perhaps the most preferred. You first need to find the file and then read it. This can be done with the `file.choose` and `read.table` functions:

R code

```

file.name <- file.choose() #note the open and closing parentheses
my.data <- read.table(file.name)

```

`file.choose` opens a search window on your system just like any open file command does. It doesn't actually read the file, it just finds the file. The `read.table` command is also necessary. It assumes that the first row of your table has labels for each column. If this is not true, specify `names=FALSE`, e.g.,

R code

```

file.name <- file.choose()
my.data <- read.table(file.name, names = FALSE)

```

### 3.2 Copy the data from another program using the copy and paste commands of your operating system

However, many users will enter their data in a text editor or spreadsheet program and then want to copy and paste into R. This may be done by using `read.table` and specifying the input file as "clipboard" (PCs) or "pipe(pbpaste)" (Macs). Alternatively, the `read.clipboard` set of functions are perhaps more user friendly:

**`read.clipboard`** is the base function for reading data from the clipboard.

**`read.clipboard.csv`** for reading text that is comma delimited.

**`read.clipboard.tab`** for reading text that is tab delimited (e.g., copied directly from an Excel file).

**`read.clipboard.lower`** for reading input of a lower triangular matrix with or without a diagonal. The resulting object is a square matrix.

**read.clipboard.upper** for reading input of an upper triangular matrix.

**read.clipboard.fwf** for reading in fixed width fields (some very old data sets)

For example, given a data set copied to the clipboard from a spreadsheet, just enter the command

```
my.data <- read.clipboard()
```

This will work if every data field has a value and even missing data are given some values (e.g., NA or -999). If the data were entered in a spreadsheet and the missing values were just empty cells, then the data should be read in as a tab delimited or by using the `read.clipboard.tab` function.

```
my.data <- read.clipboard(sep="\t") #define the tab option, or
my.tab.data <- read.clipboard.tab() #just use the alternative function
```

For the case of data in fixed width fields (some old data sets tend to have this format), copy to the clipboard and then specify the width of each field (in the example below, the first variable is 5 columns, the second is 2 columns, the next 5 are 1 column the last 4 are 3 columns).

```
my.data <- read.clipboard.fwf(widths=c(5,2,rep(1,5),rep(3,4)))
```

### 3.3 Import from an SPSS or SAS file

To read data from an SPSS, SAS, or Systat file, you must use the *foreign* package. This should come with Base R need to be loaded using the `library` command.

`read.spss` reads a file stored by the SPSS save or export commands.

```
read.spss(file, use.value.labels = TRUE, to.data.frame = FALSE,
          max.value.labels = Inf, trim.factor.names = FALSE,
          trim_values = TRUE, reencode = NA, use.missings = to.data.frame)
```

The `read.spss` function has many parameters that need to be set. In the example, I have used the parameters that I think are most useful.

**file** Character string: the name of the file or URL to read.

**use.value.labels** Convert variables with value labels into R factors with those levels?

**to.data.frame** return a data frame? Defaults to FALSE, probably should be TRUE in most cases.

**max.value.labels** Only variables with value labels and at most this many unique values will be converted to factors if `use.value.labels = TRUE`.

**trim.factor.names** Logical: trim trailing spaces from factor levels?



**trim.values** logical: should values and value labels have trailing spaces ignored when matching for use.value.labels = *TRUE*?

**use.missings** logical: should information on user-defined missing values be used to set the corresponding values to NA?

The following is an example of reading from a remote SPSS file and then describing the data set to make sure that it looks ok (with thanks to Eli Finkel).

```
R code
library(foreign)
datafilename <- "http://personality-project.org/r/datasets/finkel.sav"
eli <- read.spss(datafilename,to.data.frame=TRUE,use.value.labels=FALSE)

describe(eli,skew=FALSE)
```

	var	n	mean	sd	median	trimmed	mad	min	max	range	se
USER*	1	69	35.00	20.06	35	35.00	25.20	1	69	68	2.42
HAPPY	2	69	5.71	1.04	6	5.82	0.00	2	7	5	0.13
SOULMATE	3	69	5.09	1.80	5	5.32	1.48	1	7	6	0.22
ENJOYDEX	4	68	6.47	1.01	7	6.70	0.00	2	7	5	0.12
UPSET	5	69	0.41	0.49	0	0.39	0.00	0	1	1	0.06

## 4 Some simple descriptive statistics before you start

Although you probably want to jump right in and do a factor analysis or find  $\omega$ , you should first make sure that your data are reasonable. Use the `describe` function to get some basic descriptive statistics. This next example takes advantage of a built in data set (`sat.act`) in the `psych` package.

```
R code
my.data <- sat.act #built in example -- replace with your data
pairs.panels(sat.act,pch='.')
describe(my.data)
```

	var	n	mean	sd	median	trimmed	mad	min	max	range	skew	kurtosis	se
gender	1	700	1.65	0.48	2	1.68	0.00	1	2	1	-0.61	-1.62	0.02
education	2	700	3.16	1.43	3	3.31	1.48	0	5	5	-0.68	-0.07	0.05
age	3	700	25.59	9.50	22	23.86	5.93	13	65	52	1.64	2.42	0.36
ACT	4	700	28.55	4.82	29	28.84	4.45	3	36	33	-0.66	0.53	0.18
SATV	5	700	612.23	112.90	620	619.45	118.61	200	800	600	-0.64	0.33	4.27
SATQ	6	687	610.22	115.64	620	617.25	118.61	200	800	600	-0.59	-0.02	4.41

In addition to simple descriptives, it is always helpful to graphically examine your data using the `pairs.panels` function.

There are, of course, all kinds of things you could do with your data at this point, but read about them in one of the vignettes for the `psych` package <http://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/psychTools/vignettes/overview.pdf> or just go to the Personality-Project.org site <https://personality-project.org/r/psych>

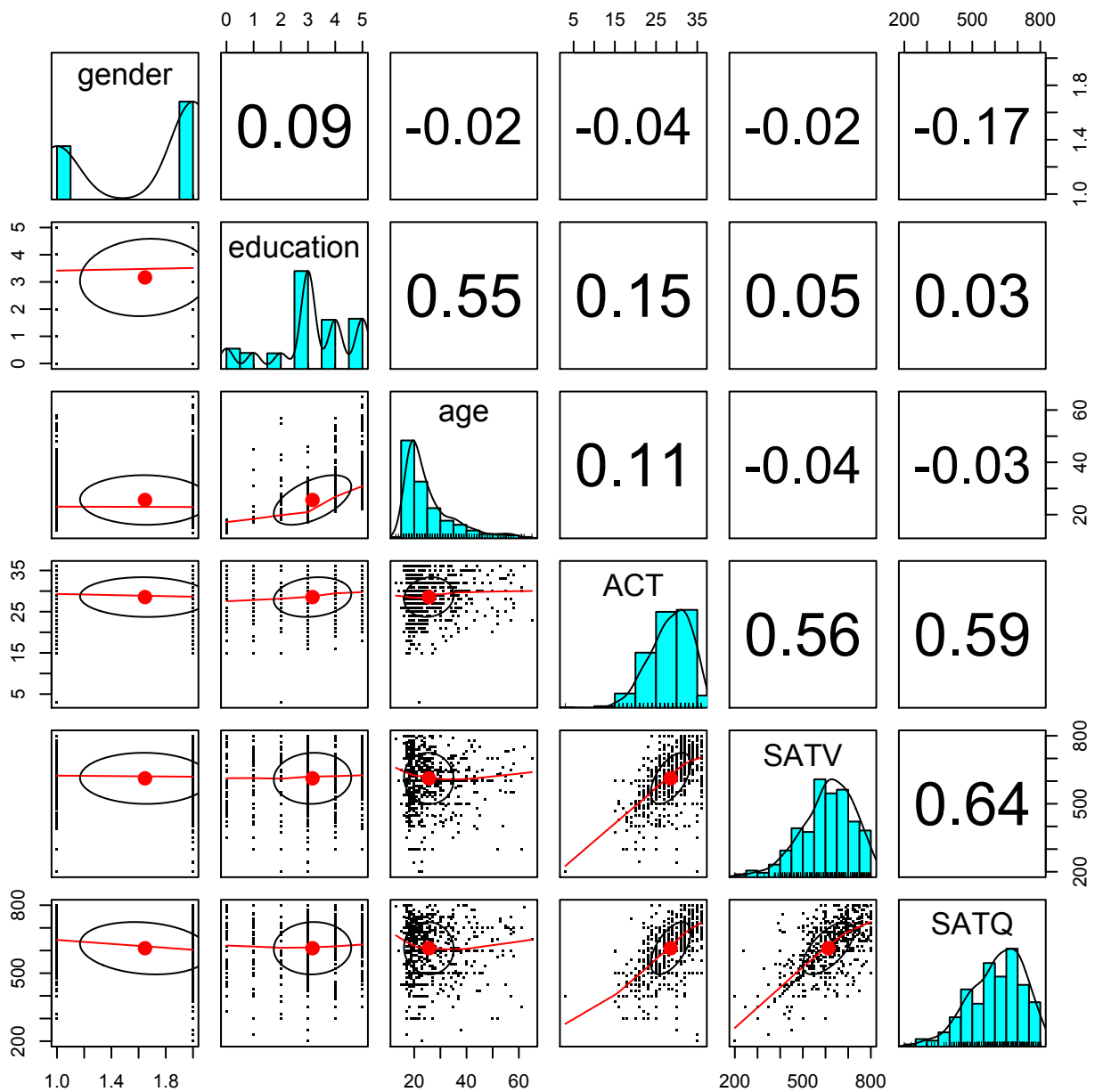


Figure 9: A scatter plot matrix (splom) of a data set is a powerful way to examine a data set. Elements on the diagonal show the histograms and densities of the data, lower off diagonal elements are the pairwise scatter plots, upper off diagonal elements are the pairwise correlations.

## References

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