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# Everyday vs. Every Day: How to Choose the Right Word

**One is an adjective, the other an adverbial phrase**

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The space between two words can make a big difference: "Everyday" doesn't mean the same thing as "every day." Like "[anyone](#)" and "[any one](#)" or "anytime" and "any time," these two terms sound exactly the same and are often confused, though one is strictly an adjective and the other is an adverbial phrase.

## How to Use "Everyday"

The [adjective](#) "everyday" (written as one word) means routine, ordinary, or commonplace. It's frequently paired with the word "occurrence" to describe something mundane. The word often directly precedes the noun it modifies, such as when we say that something is an "everyday activity" or an "everyday habit."

## How to Use "Every Day"

"Every day" (written as two words) is an [adverbial phrase](#)—a group of words that functions as an [adverb](#)—that means "each day" or "daily." It's used to refer to repeated actions or occurrences. Unlike the adjective "everyday," "every day"

usually follows the verb it modifies, such as when we say that we "exercise every day" or "read the newspaper every day."

## Examples

Though "everyday" and "every day" have related meanings, they are different [parts of speech](#), and you can usually tell which one is appropriate to use by looking at the context. As an adjective, "everyday" is always used to modify nouns:

- When you're in low spirits, it can be challenging to do even small **everyday** chores.
- Robert wanted to buy a durable, lightweight jacket for **everyday** use.

"Every day," as an adverbial phrase, is always used to modify verbs:

- **Every day** I watch the evening news to find out about the weather.
- He has to suffer through a long commute **every day**.

In the first example, "every day" modifies the verb "watch"; in the second, it modifies the verb "suffer."

## How to Remember the Difference

One way to make sure you're using "every day" correctly is to replace it with the phrase "each day" (or something even more specific such as "every Monday"). If you can do so, you've used the expression correctly:

- **Every day** I watch the evening news to find out about the weather.
- **Each day** I watch the evening news to find out about the weather.

If you can't replace the word with "each day," then you need to use "everyday" instead:

- Robert wanted to buy a durable, lightweight jacket for **everyday** use.
- Robert wanted to buy a durable, lightweight jacket for **each day** use.

"Each day" is obviously incorrect; this example calls for an adjective to modify "use."

Another tip is to insert the adjective "single" between "every" and "day." If you can do this and the sentence still makes sense, then the two-word "every day" is the appropriate phrase:

- **Two words:** You have to do your exercises **every day**.
- **"Single" test:** You have to do your exercises **every single day**.
- **Adjectival, one word:** You have to do your **everyday** exercises.
- **Incorrect change:** You have to do your **every single day** exercises.

Notice how the incorrect change doesn't make sense as it is written. After reading it, you want to rearrange the words in the correct order.

Language expert Charles Harrington Elster, in his book "The Accidents of Style," sums up the difference between "every day" and "everyday" quite succinctly: "If something can be used *every day*, it is suitable for *everyday* use. Some chores must be done *every day*, which makes them *everyday* chores."

## Sources

- Carroll, William. "The Untied Stats on American: And Other Computer Assisted Writing Errors." iUniverse, Inc., 2005, p. 39.
- Elster, Charles Harrington. "The Accidents of Style: Good Advice on How Not to Write Badly." St. Martin's Griffin, 2010, p. 13.