

[help contents_saving](#); [help dta](#)

First, note some key features of Stata with respect to loading and using data:

- Stata datasets are stored with extension `.dta`
- You can use only one dataset per Stata session.
- However, you can always run parallel Stata sessions and a different dataset in each session. Yet, be aware that memory usage is multiplied by the number of sessions.

[help use](#); [help using](#)

cd C:\data

First change the working path to this directory.

If you do not know the name or the path of a dataset, then use the drop-down menu *File>Open...* to locate and load the dataset. If you know the name and the path of the dataset then apply the command `use`:

use C:\data\EU_ni.dta

Load dataset *EU_ni.dta* from path *C:\data*.

There are times when you need only subsets of data and not the entire dataset. In such instances, it is wise to `using` only the restricted subset of data and significantly save on memory. For example, to perform a cross-sectional analysis on all companies that have reported negative net income (losses) for year 2000, you only need the following data:

clear

First, `clear` the memory from the data and then:

use company year ni if ni<0 & year==2000 using C:\data\EU_ni.dta

count

`count` the data to verify the restricted dataset.

use EU_ni, clear

First, `clear` the data and then `use` again this dataset.

The last command combines the option `clear` with the command `use`. Stata works by reading the options first and then the command. Hence with syntax `use, clear` Stata will first read that it needs to `clear` the data before loading the dataset.

Lastly, notice that in the last example above we omitted the working path *C:\data* as well as the extension `.dta`. This is because Stata understands to look for the dataset into the current working path directory and also assumes that it should load a dataset with `.dta` extension (this is Stata's default data format). Remember that the working path directory is indicated in the bottom-left hand side corner of Stata's window.

