

**matrix rownames** — Name rows and columns[Description](#)[Syntax](#)[Remarks and examples](#)[Also see](#)

## Description

`matrix rownames` and `colnames` reset the row and column names of an already existing matrix.

`matrix roweq` and `coleq` also reset the row and column names of an already existing matrix, but if a simple name (a name without a colon) is specified, it is interpreted as an equation name.

In either case, the part of the name not specified is left unchanged.

## Syntax

*Reset row names of matrix*

```
matrix rownames A = names
```

*Reset column names of matrix*

```
matrix colnames A = names
```

*Reset row names and interpret simple names as equation names*

```
matrix roweq A = names
```

*Reset column names and interpret simple names as equation names*

```
matrix coleq A = names
```

where *name* can be

- a simple name;
- a colon follow by a simple name;
- an equation name followed by a colon; or
- an equation name, a colon, and a simple name.

and a simple name may be augmented with time-series operators and factor-variable specifications.

## Remarks and examples

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See [\[U\] 14.2 Row and column names](#) for a description of the row and column names bordering a matrix.

## ▷ Example 1

In general, the names bordering matrices are set correctly by Stata because of the tracking of the matrix algebra, and you will not need to reset them. Nevertheless, imagine that you have formed  $X'X$  in the matrix named `XX` and that it corresponds to the underlying variables `price`, `weight`, and `mpg`:

```
. matrix list XX
symmetric XX[3,3]
      c1      c2      c3
r1  3.448e+09
r2  1.468e+09  7.188e+08
r3  9132716   4493720   36008
```

You did not form this matrix with `matrix accum` because, had you done so, the rows and columns would already be correctly named. However you formed it, you now want to reset the names:

```
. matrix rownames XX = price weight mpg
. matrix colnames XX = price weight mpg
. matrix list XX
symmetric XX[3,3]
      price      weight      mpg
price  3.448e+09
weight 1.468e+09  7.188e+08
mpg    9132716   4493720   36008
```

◀

## ▷ Example 2

We now demonstrate setting the equation names and names with time-series operators.

```
. matrix list AA
symmetric AA[4,4]
      c1      c2      c3      c4
r1  .2967663
r2  .03682017 .57644416
r3  -.87052852 .32713601  20.274957
r4  -1.572579 -.63830843 -12.150097  26.099582
. matrix rownames AA = length L3D2.length mpg L.mpg
. matrix colnames AA = length L3D2.length mpg L.mpg
. matrix roweq AA = eq1 eq1 eq2 eq2
. matrix coleq AA = eq1 eq1 eq2 eq2
. matrix list AA
symmetric AA[4,4]
      eq1:      eq1:      eq2:      eq2:
      length    L3D2.      L.
eq1:length      .2967663
eq1:L3D2.length .03682017 .57644416
eq2:mpg         -.87052852 .32713601  20.274957
eq2:L.mpg       -1.572579 -.63830843 -12.150097  26.099582
```

Factor variables and interactions are much like time-series-operated variables, we specify each level variable.

```
. mat rownames AA = 0b.foreign 1.foreign 0.foreign#c.mpg 1.foreign#c.mpg
. mat colnames AA = 0b.foreign 1.foreign 0.foreign#c.mpg 1.foreign#c.mpg
```

As in factor-variable varlists, we can combine any time-series lead and lag operators with factor variables.

```
. mat rownames XX = 0bL2.foreign 1L2.foreign 0L3.foreign#cL3.mpg
> 1L3.foreign#cL3.mpg
. mat colnames XX = 0bL2.foreign 1L2.foreign 0L3.foreign#cL3.mpg
> 1L3.foreign#cL3.mpg
```

◀

## □ Technical note

`matrix rownames` and `matrix colnames` sometimes behave in surprising ways:

1. If your list of names includes no colons—does not mention the equation names—whatever equation names are in place are left in place; they are not changed.
2. If your list of names has every name ending in a colon—so that it mentions only the equation names and not the subnames—whatever subnames are in place are left in place; they are not changed.
3. If your list of names has fewer names than are required to label all the rows or columns, the last name in the list is replicated. (If you specify too many names, you will get the conformability error message, and no names will be changed.)
4. `matrix rownames` and `matrix colnames` that are not interactions are limited to 32 characters, exclusive of time-series and factor-variable operators. Each component of an interaction is limited to 32 characters, exclusive of operators.

These surprises have their uses, but if you make a mistake, the result really may surprise you. For instance, rule 3, by itself, is just odd. Combined with rule 2, however, rule 3 allows you to set all the equation names in a matrix easily. If you type `'matrix rownames XX = myeq:'`, all the equation names in the row are reset while the subnames are left unchanged:

```
. matrix rownames XX = myeq:
. matrix list XX
symmetric XX[3,3]
      price      weight      mpg
myeq:price  3.448e+09
myeq:weight  1.468e+09  7.188e+08
myeq:mpg     9132716   4493720   36008
```

Setting equation names is often done before forming a partitioned matrix so that, when the components are assembled, each has the correct equation name.

Thus to review, to get the result above, we could have typed

```
. matrix rownames XX = myeq:price myeq:weight myeq:mpg
```

or

```
. matrix rownames XX = price weight mpg
. matrix rownames XX = myeq:
```

or even

```
. matrix rownames XX = myeq:
. matrix rownames XX = price weight mpg
```

All would have resulted in the same outcome. The real surprise comes, however, when you make a mistake:

```
. matrix rownames XX = myeq:
. matrix rownames XX = price weight
. matrix list XX
symmetric XX[3,3]
      price      weight      mpg
myeq:price  3.448e+09
myeq:weight  1.468e+09  7.188e+08
myeq:weight  9132716   4493720   36008
```

Our mistake above is that we listed only two names for the subnames of the rows of `XX` and `matrix rownames` and then labeled both of the last rows with the subtitle `weight`. □

#### □ Technical note

The equation name `_:` by itself is special; it means the null equation name. For instance, as of the last technical note, we were left with

```
. matrix list XX
symmetric XX[3,3]
      price      weight      mpg
myeq:price  3.448e+09
myeq:weight  1.468e+09  7.188e+08
myeq:weight  9132716   4493720   36008
```

Let's fix it:

```
. matrix rownames XX = price weight mpg
. matrix rownames XX = _:
. matrix list XX
symmetric XX[3,3]
      price      weight      mpg
price  3.448e+09
weight 1.468e+09  7.188e+08
mpg    9132716   4493720   36008
```

□

#### □ Technical note

`matrix roweq` and `matrix coleq` are really the same commands as `matrix rownames` and `matrix colnames`. They differ in only one respect: if a specified name does not contain a colon, `matrix roweq` and `matrix coleq` interpret that name as if it did end in a colon.

`matrix rownames`, `matrix colnames`, `matrix roweq`, and `matrix coleq` are often used in conjunction with the `rowfullnames`, `colfullnames`, `rownames`, `colnames`, `roweq`, and `coleq` extended macro functions introduced in [P] [matrix define](#). The `rownames` and `colnames` extended macro functions return only the name, including any time-series or factor-variable operators, but not the equation name.

```

. matrix list AA
symmetric AA[4,4]
           eq1:      eq1:      eq2:      eq2:
           L3D2.      L3D2.      L.
           length    length    mpg      mpg
eq1:length .2967663
eq1:L3D2.length .03682017 .57644416
eq2:mpg    -.87052852 .32713601 20.274957
eq2:L.mpg  -1.572579  -.63830843 -12.150097 26.099582
. local rsubs : rownames AA
. display "The row subnames of AA are -- 'rsubs' --"
The row subnames of AA are -- length L3D2.length mpg L.mpg --

```

Similarly, the `roweq` extended macro function returns only the equation names without the trailing colon:

```

. local reqs : roweq AA
. display "The row equations of AA are -- 'reqs' --"
The row equations of AA are -- eq1 eq1 eq2 eq2 --

```

Now consider the problem that you have two matrices named A and B that have the same number of rows. A is correctly labeled and includes equation names. You want to copy the complete names of A to B. You might be tempted to type

```

. local names : rownames A
. matrix rownames B = 'names'

```

This is not adequate. You will have copied the names but not the equation names. To copy both parts of the complete names, you can type

```

. local subs : rownames A
. local eqs : roweq A
. matrix rownames B = 'subs'
. matrix roweq B = 'eqs'

```

This method can be used even when there might not be equation names. The equation name `_` is special; not only does setting an equation to that name remove the equation name, but when there is no equation name, the `roweq` and `coleq` extended macro functions return that name.

A better way to copy the names is to use the `rowfullnames` and `colfullnames` extended macro functions (see [\[P\] matrix define](#) and [\[P\] macro](#)). You can more compactly type

```

. local rname : rowfullnames A
. matrix rownames B = 'rname'

```

□

## Also see

- [\[P\] macro](#) — Macro definition and manipulation
- [\[P\] matrix](#) — Introduction to matrix commands
- [\[P\] matrix define](#) — Matrix definition, operators, and functions
- [\[U\] 14 Matrix expressions](#)