**findfile** — Find file in path

Description Syntax Options Remarks and examples Stored results Also see

## Description

`findfile` looks for a file along a specified path and, if the file is found, displays the fully qualified name and returns the name in `r(fn)`. If the file is not found, the file-not-found error, r(601), is issued.

Unless told otherwise, `findfile` looks along the ado-path, the same path that Stata uses for searching for ado-files, help files, etc.

In programming contexts, `findfile` is usually preceded by `quietly`; see [P] **quietly**.

## Syntax

`findfile` *filename* [ `, path(`*path*`)` `nodescend` `all` ]

where *filename* and *path* may optionally be enclosed in quotes, and the default is to look over the ado-path if option `path()` is not specified.

`collect` is allowed; see **[U] 11.1.10 Prefix commands**.

## Options

`path(`*path*`)` specifies the path over which `findfile` is to search. Not specifying this option is equivalent to specifying `path(‘"‘c(adopath)’"’)`.

If specified, *path* should be a list of directory (folder) names separated by semicolons; for example,

```
path(‘".;~/bin;"~/data/my data";~"’)
    path(‘".;\bin;"\data\my data";~"’)
```

The individual directory names may be enclosed in quotes, but if any are, remember to enclose the entire path argument in compound quotes.

Also any of the directory names may be specified as `STATA`, `BASE`, `SITE`, `PLUS`, `PERSONAL`, or `OLDPLACE`, which are indirect references to directories recorded by `sysdir` (see [P] **sysdir**):

```
path(BASE;SITE;.;PERSONAL;PLUS)
    path(\bin:SITE;.;PERSONAL;PLUS)
    path(‘"\bin;.;"\data\my data";PERSONAL;PLUS"’)
    path(‘".;‘c(adopath)’"’)
```

`nodescend` specifies that `findfile` not follow Stata’s normal practice of searching in letter subdirectories of directories in the path, as well as in the directories themselves. `nodescend` is rarely specified, and, if it is specified, `path()` would usually be specified, too.

`all` specifies that all files along the path with the specified name are to be found and then listed and stored in `r(fn)`. When `all` is not specified, the default is to stop the search when the first instance of the specified name is found.

When `all` is specified, the fully qualified names of the files found are returned in `r(fn)`, listed one after the other, and each enclosed in quotes. Thus when `all` is specified, if you later need to quote the returned list, you must use compound double quotes. Also remember that `findfile` issues a file-not-found error if no files are found. If you wish to suppress that and want `r(fn)` returned containing nothing, precede `findfile` with `capture`; see [P] **capture**. Thus the typical usage of `findfile, all` is

```
. capture findfile filename, all
. local filelist `"`r(fn)'"'
```

## Remarks and examples

`findfile` is not a utility to search everywhere for a file that you have lost. `findfile` is for use in those rare ado-files that use prerecorded datasets and for which you wish to place the datasets along the ado-path, along with the ado-file itself.

For instance, Stata's `icd9` command performs a mapping, and that mapping is in fact stored in a dataset containing original values and mapped values. Thus along with `icd9.ado` is dataset `icd9_cod.dta`, and that dataset is stored along the ado-path, too. Users of `icd9` know nothing about the dataset. In `icd9.ado`, the `icd9_cod.dta` is merged with the data in memory. The code fragment that does that reads

```
. quietly findfile icd9_cod.dta
. merge ... using `"`r(fn)'"'
```

It would not have been possible to code

```
. merge ... using icd9_cod.dta
```

because `icd9_cod.dta` is not in the current directory.

## Stored results

`findfile` stores the following in `r()`:

Macros

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| `r(fn)` | (`all` not specified) | name of the file found; name not enclosed in quotes |
| | (`all` specified) | names of the files found, listed one after the other, each enclosed in quotes |

## Also see

[P] **sysdir** — Query and set system directories

[P] **unabcmd** — Unabbreviate command name

[D] **sysuse** — Use shipped dataset

[R] **which** — Display location of an ado-file

For suggested citations, see the FAQ on citing Stata documentation.