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Unix command to escape spaces



I am new to shell script. Can someone help me with command to escape the space with "\ ". I have a variable
FILE_PATH=/path/to my/text file ,
I want to escape the spaces alone FILE_PATH=/path/to\ my/text\ file

I tried with tr -s command but it doesnt help

```
FILE_PATH= echo FILE_PATH | tr -s " " "\\ "
```

Can somebody suggest the right command !!

[linux](#) [shell](#) [unix](#)

edited Oct 9 '12 at 19:27

 [William Pursell](#)
106k 26 172 216

asked Oct 9 '12 at 19:25

 [Wave](#)
6,881 29 71 114

What is the **real** problem you're having? – [Ignacio Vazquez-Abrams](#) Oct 9 '12 at 19:29

Just want to escape the space so that I can use in other commands like cp , rm , etc – [Wave](#) Oct 9 '12 at 19:33

5 If you want to use FILE_PATH in other commands, just use quotes. rm "\$FILE_PATH" works just fine if it contains whitespace. – [William Pursell](#) Oct 9 '12 at 19:38

Note: the -s stands for squeeze not substitute. Squeeze consecutive spaces into one space. Also, tr only replaces 1 for 1, not a space with both a backslash and space. – [cdosborn](#) Aug 19 '15 at 22:05


6 Answers

If you are using bash, you can use its builtin printf's %q formatter (type `help printf` in bash):

```
FILENAME=$(printf %q "$FILENAME")
```

This will not only quote space, but also all special characters for shell.

answered Oct 10 '12 at 2:14

 [Bao Haojun](#)
481 3 6

