

My Favorite BIF (Built-In Function): %dec submitted by [Steve Kontos](#).

As of V5R3, the **%dec** built-in-function was officially put on steroids. Prior to V5R3 all the function did was convert non-packed numeric data to packed numeric format. Big deal, right? Today, this function will handle all kinds of character to numeric conversions, including date conversions.

Here are some examples of converting character data to numeric using **%dec**. Most of these use the "free form" of RPGLE, but not all. The **%dec** bif is equally at-home in either mode.

1) Convert Character Variable to Numeric Variable

```
d order          s          9
d order#         s          9p 0

order# = %dec(order:9:0);
```

Remember the old days when you had to translate an amount in a flat text file to numeric, and you had to look for the decimal point and add the dollars and cents together? Well, **%dec** will handle decimal points and negative signs when converting to numeric:

```
d num1          s          7s 2

num1 = %dec('-1234.56':7:2);
// num1 = -01234.56
```

%dec will NOT handle dollar signs and commas however, but **%xlate** can help. For example:

```
num1 = %dec(%xlate('$,': ' '$1,234.56'):7:2);
// num1 = 01234.56
```

%dech will round (half-adjust) the result:

```
d num2          s          7p 0

num2 = %dech('-1234.56':7:0);
// num2 = -0001235
```

But wait - as they say on the Ronco commercials - there's more . . .

2) Convert Character Field to Numeric Key Field

(Note: there is a field named wcan8 in record WBCUSR)

```
d cust          8
d custkey       ds          likerec(wbcusr:*key) inz

c          eval          custkey.wcan8 = %dec(cust:8:0)
```

3) Convert an ISO Date to Character, YYYYMMDD Format, No Dashes

```
todayISO = %editc(%dec(%date():*ISO ) : 'X');  
    // Note: %char could have replaced  
    // %editc above, though...  
    // %char supresses leading zeros.  
    // The 'X' edit will not.
```

4) Convert a Timestamp to Numeric

```
d timestamp          s          20 0  
  
timestamp = %dec(%timestamp());
```

5) Convert Current Date and Time to Numeric Fields

```
mdt100 = %dec(%date()); // Modified date yyyymmdd 8.0  
mtm100 = %dec(%time()); // Modified time hhmmss 6.0
```

6) Convert Current Date to IBM Julian

```
d today_jul          s          5s 0  
  
today_jul = %dec(%date():*jul);
```

7) Convert Current Date to J.D. Edwards Julian

```
d jde_jul            s          6s 0  
  
jde_jul = %dec(%date():*jul) + 100000;
```

8) Convert Current Date to MMDDYY format

```
d today_mdy          s          6s 0  
  
today_mdy = %dec(%date():*mdy);
```

That's it. Using **%dec** has to be considered the preferred way to handle character to numeric conversions and date format conversions in free-format RPG.

Enjoy!