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Stata tip 3: How to be assertive

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`assert` verifies the truth of a claim:

```
. assert sex=="m" | sex=="f"  
. assert age>=18 & age<=65  
22 contradictions in 2740 observations  
assertion is false  
r(9);
```

The best feature of `assert` is that, when the claim is false, it stops do-files and ado-files:

```
. do my_data_prep  
. use basedata, clear  
. assert age>=18 & age<=64  
22 contradictions in 2740 observations  
assertion is false  
r(9);  
end of do-file  
r(9);
```

`assert` has two main uses:

1. It checks that claims made to you and suppositions you have made about the data you are about to process are true:

```
. assert exp==. if age<18  
. assert exp<. if age>=18
```

2. It tests that, when you write complicated code, the code produces what you expect:

```
. sort group  
. by group: gen avg = sum(hours)/sum(hours<.)  
. by group: assert avg!=. if _n==_N  
. by group: gen relative = hours/avg[_N]
```

`assert` is especially useful following `merge`:

```
. merge id  
. sort id using demog  
. assert _merge==3  
. drop _merge
```