

# Speed of `unpack()` in PHP

I needed to extract a list of integers from a binary string. I was curious to know if PHP's `unpack` function is fast compared to a custom function, so I wrote a test for it.

```
<?php$filename = ' <some large file>';$unpack_time = 0.0;$unpack_time2 = 0.0;$unpack_custom_time
```

The printout: (The numbers are the number of seconds needed to convert the file's content into integers. The file I used was 2.67 MB in size.)

```
$unpack_time = 1.34654474258$unpack_time2 = 1.44259476662$unpack_custom_time = 127.910765171
```

The result matches my earlier experiment, from which I have learned that custom functions are much slower than PHP's built-in ones. Whenever possible, use the latter. By do that, you also have less code to write and debug.

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