
Subject: Re: Preferred way to get multiple returns from a function
Posted by [Kenneth P. Bowman](#) on Sat, 12 Feb 2011 01:30:42 GMT
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In article

<6a9748b9-2b9e-4401-ab30-e65d354b6c35@y4g2000prh.googlegroups.com>,
James <donjeezy@gmail.com> wrote:

> I am writing a function that fits an ellipse to a 2*N array of
> points. There are three values to return: the center, semi-major
> axis, and semi-minor axis. This is a simple program, but it brings up
> a more general question: what is the preferred IDL way to return
> multiple values from a function?
>
> Currently, my program returns a structure containing the elements
> {center, major, minor}. However, a lot of built-in IDL routines take
> named variable inputs that are set to the appropriate value on output
> - so instead of something like:
>
> ellipse_struct = fit_ellipse(points)
>
> I would have:
>
> fit_ellipse, points, center, major, minor
>
> I'm not sure which is better. C programming has taught me to
> appreciate structures, but I'd like to code in the conventions of the
> language. Which would you prefer, and why?

It depends on the situation. Use whichever is more convenient.

Ken Bowman
