

Now that you've created a sequence object to simulate an autonumber field, we'll cover how to retrieve a value from this sequence object. To retrieve the next value in the sequence order, you need to use *nextval*.

For example:

```
supplier_seq.nextval
```

This would retrieve the next value from *supplier_seq*. The *nextval* statement needs to be used in an SQL statement. For example:

```
INSERT INTO suppliers  
(supplier_id, supplier_name)  
VALUES  
(supplier_seq.nextval, 'Kraft Foods');
```

This insert statement would insert a new record into the *suppliers* table. The *supplier_id* field would be assigned the next number from the *supplier_seq* sequence. The *supplier_name* field would be set to Kraft Foods.

Frequently Asked Questions

One common question about sequences is:

Question: While creating a sequence, what does **cache** and **nocache** options mean? For example, you could create a sequence with a cache of 20 as follows:

```
CREATE SEQUENCE supplier_seq  
  MINVALUE 1  
  START WITH 1  
  INCREMENT BY 1  
  CACHE 20;
```

Or you could create the same sequence with the **nocache** option:

```
CREATE SEQUENCE supplier_seq  
  MINVALUE 1  
  START WITH 1  
  INCREMENT BY 1  
  NOCACHE;
```

Answer: With respect to a sequence, the *cache* option specifies how many sequence values will be stored in memory for faster access.

The downside of creating a sequence with a cache is that if a system failure occurs, all cached sequence values that have **not** be used, will be "lost". This results in a "gap" in the assigned sequence values. When the system comes back up, Oracle will cache new numbers from where it left off in the sequence, ignoring the so called "lost" sequence values.

Note: To recover the lost sequence values, you can always execute an ALTER SEQUENCE command to reset the counter to the correct value.

Nocache means that none of the sequence values are stored in memory. This option may sacrifice some performance, however, you should not encounter a gap in the assigned sequence values.

Question: How do we set the LASTVALUE value in an Oracle Sequence?

Answer: You can change the LASTVALUE for an Oracle sequence, by executing an ALTER SEQUENCE command.

For example, if the last value used by the Oracle sequence was 100 and you would like to reset the sequence to serve 225 as the next value. You would execute the following commands.

```
alter sequence seq_name  
increment by 124;
```

```
select seq_name.nextval from dual;
```

```
alter sequence seq_name  
increment by 1;
```

Now, the next value to be served by the sequence will be 225.