



Summing Data in Excel

UNLOCK THE HIDDEN POWER OF THIS OFTEN-USED FUNCTION

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Summing data is one of the most common tasks in Excel, and because adding rows and columns of numbers is so popular, Excel provides several ways to do it. This article will start with a basic sum formula, show a shortcut from the ribbon, and finish with a shortcut that sums numbers without even having to write a formula.

SUM Formula

To sum a group of numbers in Excel, use the SUM function. The basic formula is `=SUM(numbers to sum)`. The most basic sum formula might look like `=SUM(A2:A10)`, which adds all of the numbers from cell A2 to A10. Note that A2 and A10 are separated by a colon, which is Excel's way of defining a range of cells. You can also use the SUM function to add several rows and columns at the same time. For example, `=SUM(B5:D15)` adds all of the cells between B5 and D15.

Our first two examples summed cells that were contiguous, or next to each other. SUM can also add numbers that are not next to each other. To add noncontiguous numbers, simply separate the numbers with a comma instead of a colon. For example, `=SUM(A2,F4)` sums the numbers in cells A2 and F4. Because we used the comma to separate the cells instead of a colon, only the values in cells A2 and F4 are included in the total. If the formula was `=SUM(A2:F4)`, all of the cells between cells A2 and F4 would be included in the total.

You can combine colons and commas in the same formula. For example, `=SUM(C1:C10,E1:E10,G1:G10)` sums the three separate ranges: C1 through C10, E1 through E10, and G1 through G10. You can combine up to 255 separate ranges, separated by commas, in one SUM formula. You can also include numbers in a SUM formula. The formula `=SUM(T7:T106,5)` sums the numbers in cells T7 through T106 and adds 5 to the balance.

Note that SUM only sums numbers. SUM ignores any text or logical (true or false) values. If any of the values included in the range to sum are errors, SUM will display an error of its own until the error in the source data is resolved.

The AutoSum Button

Because summing data is so common in Excel, it provides the AutoSum button on the ribbon that will quickly invoke the SUM function, as shown in Figure 1. To use this feature, first select the cell where you want the SUM formula, then click the AutoSum button. Excel will try to detect a range of cells either above or to the right of your selected cell. If Excel detects the cells and the range is the group of numbers you want to sum, simply hit enter to accept Excel's formula. If Excel either cannot find the cells you want to sum or does not include the correct range of cells, select the correct range of cells to sum and press enter. You can also click inside the formula in the formula bar to edit the SUM formula Excel creates.

Notice that there is a drop-down arrow to the right of the AutoSum button. Several other common Excel functions, including average, count numbers, max, and min are available from the AutoSum button. Once you are familiar with these other functions, it may be easier to type them out than to use the button, but if you are not experienced with typing Excel functions, you may find the button helpful.

Summing with the Status Bar

If you need to show the sum of numbers either on your spreadsheet or in a printed report, the SUM formulas discussed so far are very helpful. If you simply need to know the sum of some numbers on your spreadsheet but do not need to store or display that sum, the status bar is a great shortcut to save time.

The status bar is the bar at the bottom of your spreadsheet that typically shows "Ready" in the left corner. It is easy to customize the status bar to display additional information on the fly. Right-click the status bar to bring up the Customize Status Bar window, as shown in Figure 2. Click "Sum" (circled in red) to include the sum function in your status bar, as shown in Figure 3. Now that the sum function is added to the status bar, you can sum any range of numbers simply by selecting the range. The status bar will show the sum of the numbers next to the "Sum" label. The status bar can also show the count, average, max, or min of the *(continued on page 42)*



FIGURE 1

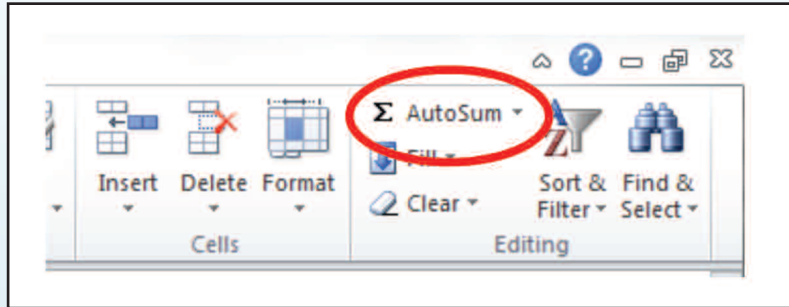


FIGURE 2

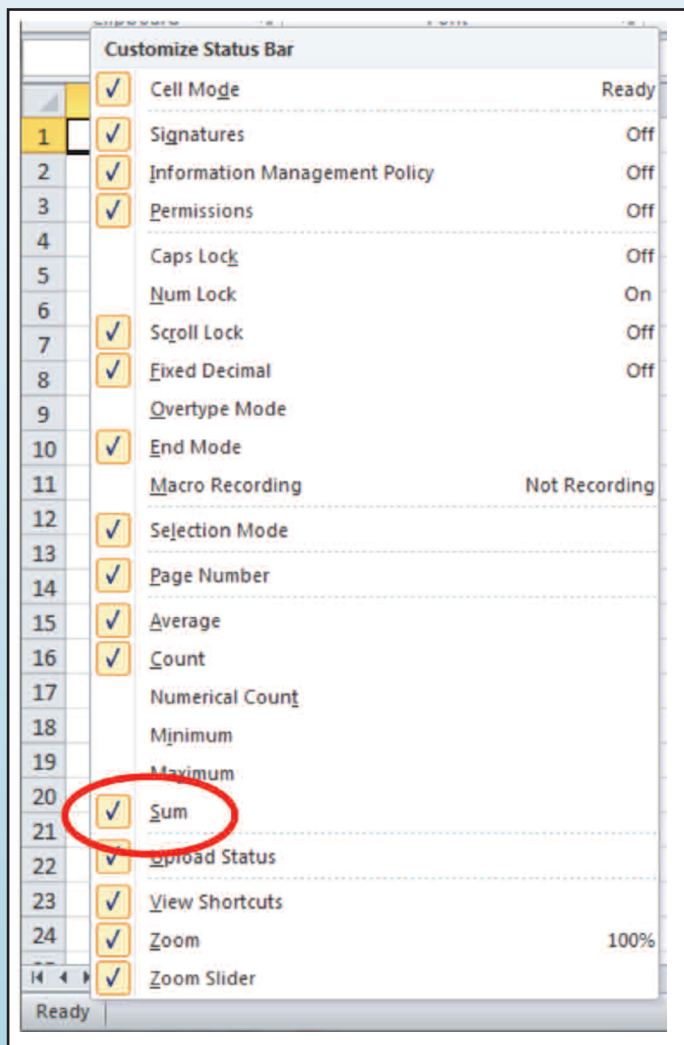
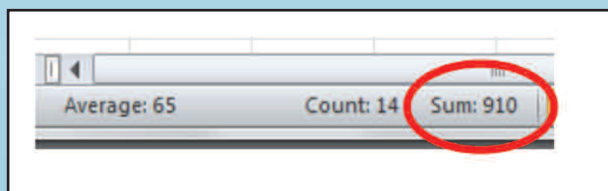


FIGURE 3



selected numbers depending on which options you checked in the Customize Status Bar window. Now that the functions you commonly use are added to the status bar, all you need to do to get quick statistics on any range of cells is to select the cells. You do not need to type a formula.

The basic SUM formulas described in this article should meet most of your summing needs. If you need to conditionally sum numbers, such as only totaling charges for code 99204 or only totaling collections for Dr. Garcia at the Main Street location, Excel offers two additional formulas, SUMIF and SUMIFS. To

learn more about conditional sums, watch Excel Videos 184 and 185 at mooresolutionsinc.com/videos.php. ■

Nate Moore, CPA, MBA, FACMPE writes custom SQL Server code to mine practice management data for practices throughout the country. His free Excel Videos have been viewed over 400,000 times and are available at mooresolutionsinc.com. Like PivotTableGuy on Facebook and follow PivotTableGuy on Twitter to be notified each time a new Excel Video is released.



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- A SUM formula in Excel allows you to skip cells and include numbers not on the spreadsheet.
a. True b. False
- The best way to track users on your website is to:
a. measure engagement
b. determine interest-areas
c. use AB/Multivariate testing
d. do all of the above
- Meaningful Use measures can be audited for up to eight years after attestation.
a. True b. False
- When trying to bring in more revenue, the most important method is to cut costs.
a. True b. False
- One of the Meaningful Use criteria that providers are having trouble meeting is the ability to create a correct clinical summary.
a. True b. False
- It is estimated that U.S. consumers will spend more than \$300 billion online in 2015.
a. True b. False
- Hospitals that have recently bought practices are a good source of new clients.
a. True b. False
- A truly loyal customer buys certain products or services exclusively from you.
a. True b. False
- Who should participate in the internal billing audit at a practice for best results?
a. only physicians
b. only practice staff
c. only the billing company
d. physicians, practice staff, and the billing company
- The reason that out-of-network EDS claims are discounted or paid at in-network rates is due to provisions provided in the Affordable Care Act.
a. True b. False