

Lesson 2-3: Use AutoSum to quickly calculate totals

anecdote

I ran an Excel course for a small company in London a couple of years ago.

The boss had sent his two office staff to learn a little more about Excel.

Before the course began I asked the delegates how long they had been using Excel. They told me that they'd been using it for two years to do all of their office reports.

When I showed them AutoSum they gasped in delight. "This will save us hours" they told me.

I was curious how they had been doing their reports before.

Believe it or not, they had been adding up all of the figures in each column with a calculator and then manually typed the totals at the bottom of each column.

In this case the boss had given them Excel as he had heard it was very good. Unfortunately he had not initially seen the need to train the staff in its use.

With no training it seemed quite logical to them to use it like a word processor and the boss had still been delighted that his staff were using such impressive technology.

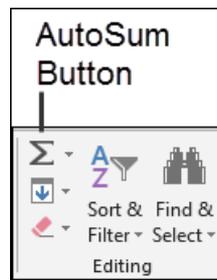
Excel's *AutoSum* feature is a really useful and fast way to add the values in a range of cells together.

- 1 Open *First Quarter Sales and Profit-2* from your sample files folder.
- 2 In cell A9 Type the word **Total** followed by the <Tab> key.

The active cell moves to the right and is now in cell B9:

| | A | B | C | D |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 7 | Paris | 35,000 | 26,000 | 31,000 |
| 8 | Munich | 12,000 | 15,000 | 13,000 |
| 9 | Total | | | |

- 3 Click: Home→Editing→ (this is the AutoSum button).



Something interesting has happened to the worksheet:

| | A | B | C | D |
|----|-------------|------------------------------|--------|--------|
| 3 | | Jan | Feb | Mar |
| 4 | New York | 22,000 | 29,000 | 19,000 |
| 5 | Los Angeles | 42,000 | 39,000 | 43,000 |
| 6 | London | 18,000 | 20,000 | 22,000 |
| 7 | Paris | 35,000 | 26,000 | 31,000 |
| 8 | Munich | 12,000 | 15,000 | 13,000 |
| 9 | Total | =SUM(B4:B8) | | |
| 10 | | SUM(number1, [number2], ...) | | |

Excel has placed a *marquee* around the number range that AutoSum has guessed we want to work with. The pattern of dots that marks the boundary of the marquee are called the *marching ants*.

The marching ants surround all of the numbers in the column above, up to the first blank cell or text cell (in this case, up to the word Jan).

=Sum(B4:B8) is your first glimpse of an Excel *Formula*. Formulas always begin with an equals sign. This formula is using the SUM function to compute the Sum (or total) of the values in cells B4 to B8.

- 4 Press the <Enter> key or click the AutoSum button  once more to display the total January sales:

First Quarter Sales and Profit-2

tip

Entering an AutoSum using only the keyboard

You can also execute an AutoSum using the keyboard shortcut:

<Alt>+<=>

note

You can also add an AutoSum formula using the Quick Analysis button

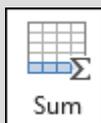
Whenever you select a range of cells, a *Quick Analysis* button appears just outside the bottom-right corner of the selected range.

| Jan | Feb |
|--------|-----|
| 22,000 | |
| 42,000 | |
| 18,000 | |
| 35,000 | |
| 12,000 | |

When you click the *Quick Analysis* button, the *Quick Analysis* dialog appears.

One of the menu options on this dialog is *Totals*.

The *Totals* dialog allows you to add an AutoSum beneath a selected range (in a similar way to the AutoSum button method described in this lesson).



| | A | B | C | D |
|---|-------------|---------|--------|--------|
| 3 | | Jan | Feb | Mar |
| 4 | New York | 22,000 | 29,000 | 19,000 |
| 5 | Los Angeles | 42,000 | 39,000 | 43,000 |
| 6 | London | 18,000 | 20,000 | 22,000 |
| 7 | Paris | 35,000 | 26,000 | 31,000 |
| 8 | Munich | 12,000 | 15,000 | 13,000 |
| 9 | Total | 129,000 | | |

- 5 Type the word **Total** into cell E3 and press the <Enter> key once.

The active cell moves down one row and is now in cell E4.

| | A | B | C | D | E |
|---|-------------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| 3 | | Jan | Feb | Mar | Total |
| 4 | New York | 22,000 | 29,000 | 19,000 | |
| 5 | Los Angeles | 42,000 | 39,000 | 43,000 | |

- 6 Use AutoSum to calculate sales for New York.

1. Click: Home→Editing→AutoSum.

This time AutoSum correctly guesses that you want to sum the values to the left of cell E4:

| | B | C | D | E | F |
|---|--------|--------|--------|------------------------------|---|
| 3 | Jan | Feb | Mar | Total | |
| 4 | 22,000 | 29,000 | 19,000 | =SUM(B4:D4) | |
| 5 | 42,000 | 39,000 | 43,000 | SUM(number1, [number2], ...) | |

2. Press the <Enter> key, or click the AutoSum button once more.

| | A | B | C | D | E |
|---|--|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1 | Sales and Profit Report - First Quarter 2008 | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | |
| 3 | | Jan | Feb | Mar | Total |
| 4 | New York | 22,000 | 29,000 | 19,000 | 70,000 |
| 5 | Los Angeles | 42,000 | 39,000 | 43,000 | |
| 6 | London | 18,000 | 20,000 | 22,000 | |
| 7 | Paris | 35,000 | 26,000 | 31,000 | |
| 8 | Munich | 12,000 | 15,000 | 13,000 | |
| 9 | Total | 129,000 | | | |

- 7 Save your work as *First Quarter Sales and Profit-3*.