

Published based on [Using The AutoSum Button In Microsoft Excel](#)

# Using The AutoSum Button In Microsoft Excel

The AutoSum tool in [Microsoft Excel 2007](#) is used to automatically generate formulas. It is found in two locations on the ribbon: firstly in the Editing section of the Home Tab; and, secondly in the Function Library section of the Formulas Tab.

The AutoSum tool has several uses. Firstly you can use it to generate the total or SUM of a series of numbers. To do this, you can select a row of cells and click once on the AutoSum tool. Excel places the total of the highlighted cells in the first available empty cell to the right of the highlighted range. You can then copy the formula by using the Autofill handle. As you drag down, Excel will copy the formula making the changes necessary to return the correct total for each row.

The AutoSum tool can also be used to calculate the total of several columns simultaneously. To do this, select all the data in all the columns you wish to total and then click once on the AutoSum tool. Excel creates a formula at the bottom of each column in the first vacant cell.

Clicking on the AutoSum tool always generates a formula using the SUM function which returns the total of a given range of cells. However the AutoSum tool can also be used with other functions: for example, AVERAGE. To access these other functions, click on the drop-down menu to the right of the AutoSum tool, choose the appropriate function and then check to see whether Excel has correctly guessed the range of cells you want to apply the function to.

If Excel has failed to guess, you can correct it: either by typing the correct reference; or simply resize the selection rectangle until it encloses the correct range of cells then press the Enter key or click on the Enter button located on the left of the formula bar. The formula can then be copied using the AutoFill handle.

The AVERAGE function is notorious for returning too many decimal places. If you want a consistent number of decimals, click on the Launch button in the Number section of the Home Tab, choose "Number" as the category and then specify the number of decimal places you like.

The other functions available on the AutoSum tool are COUNT, which returns the number of cells in the highlighted range containing numbers; MAX, which calculates the highest value in the range; and MIN which gives the lowest value. The last option in the AutoSum tool drop-down menu is "Other Functions", which gives you access to Excel's full range of functions.

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