

■ Excel 2003 - More Tips

Our last newsletter had some basic Excel 2003 tips - quick shortcuts to common tasks. For this newsletter, we'll go over some more advanced tips to aid you further in your productivity.

Excel tips featured in this newsletter

- Quick Tips
 - Hard returns in cells
 - Entering fractions
 - Quick calculator
- Auto Fill
- Fast Formulas
 - Tools Menu
 - Change Enter direction
 - Modify default style & location of workbooks

■ Tip of the Month

Need MS Office Tips? Go to the source ...

Microsoft offers free tips to users of Office including Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint and more. The instructions are easy to follow and most offer great snapshots for each tutorial. Here are some good bets for the software titles mentioned above.

Word - Top Tips for Word

<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/word/HA010963811033.aspx>

Excel - Examples of Commonly Used Formulas

<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/excel/HP052001271033.aspx>

Outlook - Top Tips for Outlook

<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/outlook/HA010970221033.aspx>

PowerPoint - Formatting Slides and Presentations

<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/powerpoint/CH063500541033.aspx>

Quick Tips

Here are some handy shortcuts and little known conveniences:

- 1) **Insert a hard return in a cell** - If you type some text in a cell and press Enter, you'll drop down or move over to the next cell. If you press and hold the **Alt key** then hit **Enter** at the end of the line of text, you'll stay within the same cell but will now have two lines. [This tip works great for footnotes.]
- 2) **Fractions** - Excel is a great program but finicky when it comes to fractions. If you type 1/2 in a cell, 2-Jan will appear (which is a tip in itself). To get an actual fraction to appear, type **0 1/2** (That's zero 1/2). You can also format the cell as text and anything you type will remain as entered.
- 3) **Quick Math** - Excel has a built in calculator that appears in the status bar near the lower right corner of the program. If you select cells of numbers (adjacent numbers - by clicking and dragging, or non-adjacent numbers - by holding down the CTRL button and selecting cells), a value will appear. The default is SUM but if you **right click this value, a menu will appear** listing: Average, Count, Count Nums, Max, Min, and Sum. Select the option you want and the value will change automatically. Handy feature if you don't want to include this information on the sheet but need a quick answer.

■ Websites Worth Watching

- ▶ www.pricegrabber.com - Comparison shopping site. Looking for the best price? Save time and check here before you buy.
- ▶ www.dealnews.com - Retailers want you to buy and dealnews wants you to get a good price. Check this site for the best deals, coupons, and advertisements for online and storefront retailers.

Auto Fill Cells

There are several different ways to auto fill cells in Excel. If you frequently copy or enter consecutive numbers or text in columns or rows, there's a quick way to enter the values without much typing. The Microsoft chart on the right shows useful options (Figure 1).

If you want to copy the same value from one cell to adjacent cells, click the cell and position your cursor over the fill handle (black square in the lower right corner) until a black + sign appears. If you hold and drag while the black + is visible, the data in the cell will copy to any adjacent cell(s). (Figure 2)

	A	B	C	D
1				
2	1	1	1	
3				

Figure 2. Auto fill feature. The autofill handle is the black square in the lower right corner of each selected cell.

For consecutive values like 1, 2, 3 or Jan, Feb, March do the following:

- 1) Enter the first number or month in a cell and then click the black + in the lower right corner of the cell.
- 2) When the black + sign appears, click and drag either to the right or down.
- 3) A small box (Figure 3) will appear at the end of the row. Months are automatic while numbers will default to copying the cell value. Left click and choose Fill Series and the values will increase.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1						
2	1	2	3			
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						

Figure 3. Excel worksheet showing the Auto Fill drop down box for selecting formatting options. Left click the down arrow to make the box visible.

Initial selection	Extended series
1, 2, 3	4, 5, 6,...
9:00	10:00, 11:00, 12:00,...
Mon	Tue, Wed, Thu,...
Monday	Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday,...
Jan	Feb, Mar, Apr,...
Jan, Apr	Jul, Oct, Jan,...
Jan-07, Apr-07	Jul-07, Oct-07, Jan-08,...
15-Jan, 15-Apr	15-Jul, 15-Oct,...
2007, 2008	2009, 2010, 2011,...
1-Jan, 1-Mar	1-May, 1-Jul, 1-Sep,...
Qtr3 (or Q3 or Quarter3)	Qtr4, Qtr1, Qtr2,...
text1, textA	text2, textA, text3, textA,...
1st Period	2nd Period, 3rd Period,...
Product 1	Product 2, Product 3,...

Figure 1. Chart shows ideas for the Auto Fill feature in Excel.

Source: office.microsoft.com/en-us/excel/HP012163661033.aspx

To display non-consecutive values, type the first two values in consecutive cells, then click and drag down columns or across rows (with the black + sign showing). The pattern will continue automatically (Figure 4).

	A	B
1		
2	Jan	
3	Mar	
4	May	
5	Jul	
6	Sep	
7		
8		

Figure 4. Excel worksheet showing non-consecutive Auto Fill option. Step 1 (on left) - enter two values; Step 2 (on right) - hover over the black square until the black + appears. Drag down to display the series for as many rows as you need.

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Auto Fill - continued

Three additional notes/options regarding Auto Fill:

1) If you want the values to appear to the left or upwards of your initial value, the resulting values will decrease. For instance, if you type Jan in cell D2, grab the black + and drag to the left - Dec, Nov, etc. will appear to the left of Jan (Figure 5).

2) Likewise, if you type 4 in cell B7, click and drag the black + sign upwards, and choose Fill series from the drop down menu, the values will decrease, producing negative numbers if the number of cells goes past 0 (Figure 6).

3) NOTE: when you click a cell and a **white cross** appears, if you left click and drag across or down cells you are selecting cells (highlighting for further action). If you click in a cell and a **black cross** appears, when you drag across or down cells, you are copying / entering data in cells.

	A	B	C	D
1				
2	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
3				

Figure 5. Auto Filling to the left of the original value.

	A	B	C
1			
2		-1	
3		0	
4		1	
5		2	
6		3	
7		4	
8			

Figure 6. Auto Filling a column upwards

Remember: white cross = select cells
black cross = copy / enter data in cells

Fast formulas

Typing formulas over and over can be cumbersome. If you have **similar formulas in different locations** of your worksheet, try the following tip (Figure 7).

Once all your data is entered, type a formula into a cell and click copy [cell A11 formula =SUM(A2:A10)]. While holding down the **CTRL** key, left click **all** of the cells (C11 in this case) that require that same formula and then hit Enter. Excel will automatically adjust the cell row and column for each cell you select based on the original formula. The cells will be highlighted as it appears in Figure 7.

If you have a worksheet full of numbers and formulas in non-adjacent columns **or** rows, this tip can be a real timesaver.

	A	B	C	D
1	Widget1	Location	Widget2	
2	1	NY	1	
3	2	PA	2	
4	3	CT	3	
5	4	CO	4	
6	5	MA	5	
7	6	ME	6	
8	7	NJ	7	
9	8	MD	8	
10	9	WA	9	
11	45		45	

Figure 7. Entering formulas fast by holding down the CTRL key, selecting each cell and then hitting Enter.

→ More Excel tips

Have you backed up your data? Is it in a safe location?

Have you confirmed the data is available in case you need to restore?

Remember: An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!

Tools Menu

Most people don't think about customizing Excel but it can be a real timesaver. Here are some options to consider that may really help with your workflow.

Change the direction of the Enter key

If you're entering data quickly, you want the keyboard to work with you, not against you. Changing the default cell when you hit the Enter key can save a lot of frustration (Figure 8).

1. On the main menu, click Tools - scroll down to Options ... and the Options dialog box appears.
2. Click the Edit tab.
3. Below the Move Selection after Enter field, click the dropdown box and choose which direction you want - Left, Right, Up or Down.
4. Click OK and your selection is saved.

If you have worksheets that require a different

direction when you hit Enter, you'll need to change this feature for each worksheet you open.

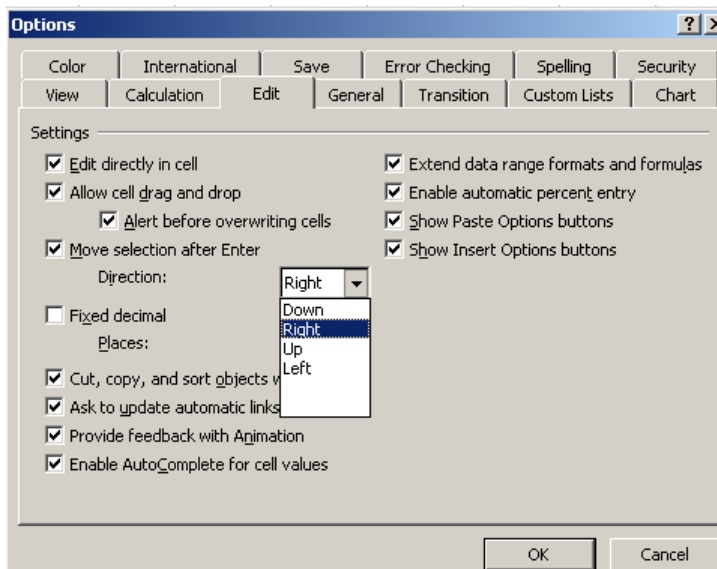


Figure 8. Options dialog box on the Tools menu. Click the Edit tab to change the direction when you click Enter.

Change the default style or file location of each worksheet

Most people have their own individual, personal style and so should your worksheets. If you're not happy with Arial or Times New Roman (the ubiquitous default style fonts in every Microsoft software program), then go ahead and change them once and for all. This is also the place where you can change the **default file location** of your Excel documents (Figure 9).

1. Click Tools on the main menu, then scroll down to Options.
2. Click the General tab.
3. At the bottom of the dialog box, you'll see drop down boxes for Font, Size, number of worksheets per workbook and more.
4. Change whichever feature(s) you want, then click OK.
5. Each time you open a new worksheet, you won't have to change these features.

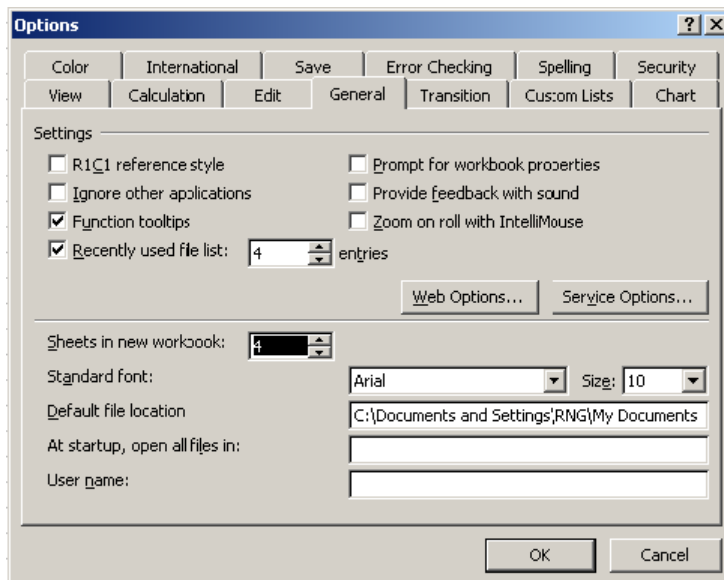


Figure 9. To change the default style and file location of worksheets, go to Tools - Options - General Tab.

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