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Excel basics: freeze panes, adding up and filters

Excel can look intimidating, but a few simple tricks solve many everyday headaches. Menus differ between versions, so use the closest wording.

Freeze panes: keep headings in view

When you scroll down a long list, the headings can disappear. To keep them:

1. Click the cell just below the heading row and to the right of any column you want to keep.
2. Click the **View** tab.
3. Click **Freeze Panes**, then choose **Freeze Panes** again.

To undo it, go to the same menu and choose **Unfreeze Panes**. You can also choose **Freeze Top Row** if you only need the top line.

Adding up numbers

1. Click the empty cell below the numbers you want to add.
2. Click **AutoSum** on the **Home** tab (it shows a Greek letter sigma).
3. Check that the highlighted numbers are the right ones.
4. Press **Enter**.

You can also type `=SUM(` and then drag over the cells, close the bracket and press **Enter**. If the total looks wrong, some numbers may have been entered as text. They are often left-aligned or have a green corner.

Filtering a list

1. Click inside your data.
2. Click the **Data** tab and then **Filter**.
3. Small arrows appear on each heading. Click one and untick what you do not want to see.
4. Click **OK**.

Filtered rows are hidden, not deleted. To show everything again, click **Clear** in the same menu, or turn **Filter** off.

Sorting

Use the filter arrow and choose to sort A to Z or smallest to largest. Make sure you select all the columns first, or sort inside a filtered table, so that rows stay together. Sorting only one column scrambles data.

Be careful

- Save a copy before big changes.
- Do not delete rows when you mean to hide them.
- Use **Ctrl + Z** to undo a mistake straight away.

When to get more help

Contact us if figures keep changing unexpectedly, if formulas show errors such as `#REF!` or `#VALUE!`, or if a business spreadsheet is very important and you are not sure it is correct.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.