

Learn How to Use SUMIFS with Multiple Criteria in the Same Column in Excel

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Unlocking Advanced Data Aggregation with SUMIFS

[Microsoft Excel](#) is universally recognized as an indispensable tool for robust [data analysis](#), providing a sophisticated suite of functions designed to extract meaningful insights from complex datasets. Chief among these powerful tools is the [SUMIFS](#) function, which specializes in performing conditional summing based on one or multiple sets of conditions across different columns. However, a frequent stumbling block for users occurs when the aggregation requirement involves summing values based on several alternative conditions--an "OR" logic--applied specifically to the **same column**.

The default [SUMIFS](#) syntax does not natively support this "OR" scenario within a single criterion argument. Fortunately, there exists an elegant and highly efficient method to resolve this challenge. By combining the versatile [SUMIFS](#) function with the standard [SUM](#) function, and critically, utilizing [array constants](#), we can force Excel to evaluate multiple criteria simultaneously. This technique significantly elevates your capacity to perform complex, conditional aggregations, thereby streamlining crucial data processing workflows.

This comprehensive guide is designed to walk you through the precise syntax and practical implementation of this powerful [spreadsheet](#) technique. You will master how to effectively sum numerical values based on multiple, mutually exclusive criteria residing within a single column, transforming what appears to be a complicated task into a straightforward and dynamic formula.

Understanding SUMIFS and the Default "AND" Logic

Before we delve into the advanced application of array constants, it is helpful to quickly review the foundational structure of the [SUMIFS](#) function. The official syntax is defined as: `SUMIFS(sum_range, criteria_range1, criteria1, , ...)`. This function is constructed to aggregate values found in the designated **sum_range**, but only when the corresponding row values satisfy every condition stipulated across the various **criteria_range** and **criteria** arguments.

By its very design, the function operates using implicit "AND" logic. For example, if you aim to sum sales figures for "Product A" located *only* in the "North Region," you would implement two separate criteria pairs. The requirement is that both the Product criterion AND the Region criterion must be met concurrently for a row's value to be included in the final summation. This inherent "AND" behavior is what limits the function when trying to sum values where a column matches "Criteria A" **OR** "Criteria B," as simply listing multiple conditions does not achieve the required alternative outcome.

The solution to implementing "OR" logic for multiple [criteria](#) within the same column is achieved through powerful formula nesting. We wrap the entire [SUMIFS](#) calculation inside an outer [SUM](#) function, supplying the multiple criteria as an [array constant](#). This ingenious combination forces

[Excel](#) to execute the [SUMIFS](#) operation for each criterion individually. This results in an array of separate totals, which the encompassing [SUM](#) function then seamlessly aggregates into one single, accurate figure.

The Core Formula: Combining SUM and SUMIFS

To successfully implement conditional summing based on multiple criteria residing in a single column, you must utilize the following specialized and powerful formula structure. This approach leverages the engine of [Excel](#) to achieve highly specific data filtering.

=SUM(SUMIFS(sum_range,criteria_range,{"criterion1","criterion2","criterion3"}))

This nested structure is the key to unlocking the "OR" logic. It instructs Excel to calculate the sum for the first criterion, then calculate the sum for the second criterion, and so on, before adding all those resulting sums together.

Deconstructing the Formula Components

Understanding each argument within this combined formula is essential for successful implementation and adaptation to various datasets. We break down the roles of the inner and outer functions below:

SUM_RANGE: This defines the specific [range](#) of cells containing the numerical values you intend to sum. If you are aggregating scores, this would be the column containing all the score values.

CRITERIA_RANGE: This specifies the [range](#) of cells that will be evaluated against your specified conditions. In the context of our example, if we are filtering by position, this is the column containing the positional labels.

{"criterion1","criterion2","criterion3"}: This is the crucial [array constant](#). It contains all the specific values that represent your "OR" conditions. When the array constant is fed into the [SUMIFS](#) function, Excel executes the function multiple times, once for each item within the curly braces, thereby creating an array of results.

SUM(...): The outer [SUM](#) function is responsible for the final aggregation. It receives the array of individual sums generated by the inner [SUMIFS](#) executions and totals them up, delivering a single, comprehensive result.

This methodical structure proves especially valuable when working with categorical data where you need to aggregate numerical metrics based on several related categories within a single column, offering a dynamic and scalable solution essential for modern [data analysis](#).

Practical Application: Calculating Basketball Player Points

To solidify your understanding of this concept, let us work through a concrete, practical example. Imagine you are managing a dataset in [Excel](#) that tracks the performance of basketball players, including their designated positions and the total points they have scored. Your primary goal is to determine the aggregate points scored exclusively by players who hold either the "Guard" or the "Center" position.

We will utilize the following sample dataset for this demonstration. The table clearly outlines the player positions and their corresponding points scored:

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Position	Points				
2	Guard	12				
3	Forward	10				
4	Forward	4				
5	Center	8				
6	Guard	8				
7	Guard	9				
8	Forward	12				
9	Forward	13				
10	Center	20				
11	Guard	22				
12	Guard	29				
13	Forward	14				
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						

In this specific scenario, our requirement is to sum the values contained in column **B** (Points) based on two distinct text [criteria](#)--"Guard" OR "Center"--which are found in column **A** (Position). The combined [SUM\(SUMIFS\(...\)\)](#) formula is perfectly tailored for this filtering task, offering an elegant and efficient means to aggregate the data precisely as needed.

Step-by-Step Formula Execution and Interpretation

To achieve our objective of calculating the combined points for Guards and Centers, we must

Verifying the Calculated Total

When implementing advanced formula techniques, especially those leveraging [array constants](#), it is always a best practice to manually verify the result to confirm the reliability of the method. We can achieve this by isolating and manually summing the points for all players tagged as "Guard" or "Center" from our source data.

Below is the dataset with the relevant entries highlighted for verification purposes:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Position	Points		Sum of Points if Position is Guard or Center			
2	Guard	12		108			
3	Forward	10					
4	Forward	4					
5	Center	8					
6	Guard	8					
7	Guard	9					
8	Forward	12					
9	Forward	13					
10	Center	20					
11	Guard	22					
12	Guard	29					
13	Forward	14					
14							
15							
16							
17							
18							
19							
20							

We proceed by manually identifying and adding the individual scores for each qualifying player:

Guards: 12 (Eli) + 8 (Frank) + 8 (Grace) + 20 (Harry) = 48 points.

Centers: 9 (David) + 22 (Ivy) + 29 (Jack) = 60 points.

The combined sum of points for Guards and Centers is calculated as: 48 + 60 = **108**.

This meticulous manual calculation precisely corroborates the value of **108** derived from our [SUM\(SUMIFS\(...\)\)](#) formula. This verification step confirms the accuracy and reliability of this nested

function approach for aggregating data based on multiple alternative [criteria](#) within a single column.

Conclusion: Mastering Conditional Summing

The skill of utilizing [SUMIFS](#) with multiple criteria in the same column--by nesting it within the [SUM](#) function and employing an [array constant](#)--is a cornerstone technique for any advanced [Excel](#) user. This methodology is incredibly empowering, allowing you to execute complex [data analysis](#) operations and construct dynamic reports that adapt to flexible, specific conditions.

By gaining a clear understanding of how [Excel](#) interprets and processes [array formulas](#) in this context, you achieve superior control and granularity over your data aggregations. Importantly, this sophisticated method is not limited solely to text-based [criteria](#); it can be seamlessly adapted for numerical conditions or date ranges, provided these conditions are structured correctly within the [array constant](#). Integrate this highly valuable approach into your [spreadsheet](#) toolkit to unlock significant new levels of efficiency and insightful reporting.

Additional Resources for Excel Mastery

To further solidify your proficiency in [Excel](#) and explore related powerful functions, we recommend reviewing the following official documentation and guides:

[Excel SUMIF Function: A Comprehensive Guide](#)

[Understanding Array Formulas in Excel](#)

[Explore All Excel Functions by Category](#)