

BENEFITS of using an Excel Table Vs. a Normal Range

# Topic	Explanation	Benefits	Notes
1 Dynamic Ranges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you add new rows or columns, they automatically get included into the range called "Table1" or whatever name you gave it. The same is true if you delete rows or columns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Useful for writing formulas such as VLOOKUP. No need to change the cell references to the "lookup table" if you added more data to the "lookup table." Useful for creating Pivot Tables. No need to change the data source ever again. When new rows get added to the table, they will automatically be included in the data source for the Pivot Table. IMPORTANT: don't forget to right-click on the Pivot Table and click "refresh" to actually show the newest data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No need to use the complicated OFFSET function to create the effect of a dynamic range.
2 Calculated Columns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you enter a formula into the first row of a table, it automatically copies that formula all the way down to the bottom of the table. Every new cell in that column automatically has that formula since it is now a "calculated column." NOTE: This automatic step of creating a "calculated column" may not work if that column has some data in it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No need to copy and paste the formulas all the way down when adding new rows to the table. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can easily create default values by simply using a calculated column of ="defaultvalue" since every new row will automatically start with that value. Excel will alert the user when a cell contains a different formula than the rest in the column (good for error checking).
3 Improved Formatting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tables look cleaner, more organized, and more professional because they apply consistent and easy to change formatting throughout the entire table. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved readability of data by using built-in feature of "banded Rows" to alternate row colors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can change the entire style of a table with a single click.
4 Descriptive & Intuitive Syntax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Battleship Syntax" (A1, B12, G6, etc.) tells the user NOTHING about the meaning behind those cells. However, "Table Syntax" includes names like Tbl_Transactions for the entire table, [Tax] for the entire Tax column, and [@Tax] for THIS ROW of the Tax column. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easier time understanding formulas while writing them out, and while looking at them later. As you start typing a reference using "Table Syntax," you can press TAB to Autocomplete the rest of the reference, saving time and improving accuracy. "Table Syntax" is dynamic, and will not change even when the location of the table changes. Incredibly beneficial when referencing cells, and when using VBA to reference cells. 	
5 Head Start for Basic Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every table comes with built-in options for filtering, sorting, and totals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Super quick analysis, as well as the ability to find what you're looking for in order to make a change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filtering and sorting within a table is dynamic. When you add new rows or columns, they are automatically INCLUDED in the filtering and sorting (not necessarily the case with standard ranges of data).

DRAWBACKS of using an Excel Table Vs. a Normal Range

# Topic	Explanation	Drawback	Notes
1 Limited Linking to External Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excel Tables can link to external data from an SQL Server or an XML file, but NOT from a standard CSV text file. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you need to import a CSV file into Excel you CANNOT use an Excel Table. 	
2 Column Width Limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When it comes to column widths, Excel does a better job with normal ranges of data than it does with Excel Tables. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When creating a Table, all existing column widths are lost. BEST PRACTICE: is to create a Table first, and THEN change column widths When re-arranging the order of columns, column widths will likely be impacted, with no built-in solution readily available. WORKAROUND: create a new worksheet, copy and paste special the table's column widths into the new worksheet. Then, make the changes to the columns of the Table as needed. Finally, copy and paste special the column widths from the new worksheet back into the table. 	
3 No Subtotals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subtotals cannot be used with Excel Tables. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excel's built-in "Subtotal" feature ("Data" tab on Ribbon --> "Subtotal" button) cannot be used with a Table. Manual subtotals should NOT be used within an Excel table (even though technically it is possible), since Excel treats each row of the table as an instance of data within the table (not as summary information about the above data). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workaround: Use an Excel Table, then create a Pivot Table to show subtotals (the default setting of Pivot Tables is to show subtotals for each field).