

Correcting Circular References

Circular references are a common error in Excel that can cause problems with your formulas. These errors occur when a formula refers to itself to determine the answer.

EXAMPLE: A circular reference will occur if the function =SUM(B1:B10) is displayed in cell B10.

In the example, cell B10 serves as both the result of the function and as one of the cells used to find the function's result. If you type a circular reference into Excel, a dialog box will appear to help you avoid this error. If you find yourself working with a document containing circular references, the following steps will help you locate and correct them.

1. From the *Formulas* command tab, in the *Formula Auditing* group, click the ▼ next to **ERROR CHECKING** » select **Circular References** » select the cell that contains the circular reference. The cell is selected.
2. In the *Formula* bar, verify the accuracy of the function and make changes as necessary
NOTES:
It is likely that you will need to either remove the self-referencing cell(s) from the formula or replace the cell(s) with the correct cell reference(s).
For more information about creating formulas, refer to *Performing Calculations with Formulas*.
3. To deselect the cell, click on the worksheet area that is not within the selected cell or the formula's cell range
4. **OPTIONAL:** If you have more than one circular reference to correct, repeat steps 1–3