

# Excel Formula: SUMIFS Not Equal to Multiple Criteria

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The SUMIFS function in Excel is an indispensable feature for advanced data analysis, allowing users to aggregate numerical information based on specific, conditional rules. When dealing with complex datasets, often the requirement is not to include specific values, but rather to exclude them--a concept known as "Not Equal To" multiple criteria. Mastering this technique empowers you to quickly process large volumes of information and generate highly accurate data summaries. For businesses, this capability is essential for making data-driven decisions, such as calculating total revenue excluding sales from specific regions, or analyzing product performance while omitting certain models. This guide explores the two primary, highly efficient ways to implement the SUMIFS Not Equal to Multiple Criteria formula in Excel, allowing you to rapidly filter your data and identify key trends.

## 1. Introduction to Advanced Conditional Summation

The ability to conditionally summarize data is a cornerstone of effective spreadsheet management. While the basic SUM function simply adds up a range of numbers, the SUMIFS function elevates this capability by integrating complex logical tests. This powerful function enables analysts and decision-makers to calculate totals only when multiple conditions are satisfied simultaneously across various corresponding ranges. Understanding how to structure these conditional statements is critical for anyone performing serious quantitative work in Excel, especially when moving beyond simple inclusion to complex exclusion.

However, many users encounter difficulties when attempting to exclude data points based on more than one specific value. Standard filtering usually handles inclusion criteria seamlessly, but exclusion requires careful application of logical operators. When we need to calculate the sum of values where the corresponding text field is NOT equal to "A" AND NOT equal to "B", the syntax must be precise. This complex filtering operation is vital in scenarios where you need a comprehensive overview of performance metrics after removing outliers or specified exceptions, ensuring the resulting summary truly reflects the desired subset of data.

This tutorial focuses on providing two robust methods for achieving multi-criteria exclusion. Both approaches are valid, but they differ significantly in their underlying logic and optimal use cases. The first method uses the traditional SUMIFS function structure with multiple criteria ranges, ideal for excluding a small, fixed number of items. The second method, utilizing array constants and subtraction, proves invaluable when the list of items to be excluded becomes extensive, offering a cleaner, more scalable solution for large exclusion sets within Excel formulas.

## 2. Understanding the SUMIFS Function Mechanics

Before diving into the complex exclusions, it is essential to review the core syntax of the SUMIFS function. This function is designed to check multiple criteria ranges and sums the values in the sum

range only if ALL specified criteria are met--it inherently operates on AND logic. The structure is fixed: `SUMIFS(sum_range, criteria_range1, criteria1, , ...)`. The order of arguments is crucial, starting with the range containing the numerical values you wish to sum.

The key to conditional summation lies in the criteria argument. This is where we introduce logical operators. To specify a condition, the operator must be enclosed in double quotes. For inclusion, we might use `">50"` or `"Apples"`. For exclusion, we use the "Not Equal To" operator, represented by the symbols `<>`. Therefore, to exclude the value "Mavs", the criteria argument is written as `"<>Mavs"`. Understanding the precise placement and formatting of these operators is non-negotiable for successful formula execution, especially when combining multiple exclusion rules.

When applying multiple criteria within SUMIFS, remember the fundamental rule: every single condition must evaluate to **TRUE** for the corresponding value in the sum range to be included in the total. For instance, if you specify criteria to sum sales where "Region is East" AND "Product is X", a sale must meet both conditions. This built-in AND logic is what makes Method 1 straightforward for exclusion, as we will see, because requiring the value to be NOT Item A AND NOT Item B simply requires adding two separate exclusion criteria to the function.

### 3. Method 1: Using Multiple Criteria Arguments (The AND Logic)

The most intuitive way to exclude two or three specific items is by simply stringing together multiple criteria pairs within a single SUMIFS function. Since the function inherently uses **AND** logic, stating that a value is NOT equal to Criterion A AND NOT equal to Criterion B perfectly achieves the desired exclusion. This method requires repeating the criteria range argument for every criterion you wish to apply, but the overall formula structure remains clean and easy to read, making it suitable for quick, short filtering tasks.

To implement this technique, you define the sum range (e.g., points scored in **B2:B12**) and then apply two sequential criteria checks against the criteria range (e.g., teams in **A2:A12**). Each check uses the `<>` operator to enforce the exclusion rule. This setup ensures that only rows that simultaneously satisfy both criteria (i.e., the team is neither Mavs nor Pacers) are included in the final summation. This is the preferred method when dealing with a minimal number of exclusions.

The resulting formula structure is as follows:

You can use the following formula in Excel to sum all values in a range where the corresponding value in another range is not equal to multiple values:

```
=SUMIFS(B2:B12,A2:A12,"<>Mavs",A2:A12,"<>Pacers")
```

This particular formula calculates the sum of the values in the range **B2:B12** where the

corresponding value in the range **A2:A12** is not equal to Mavs or Pacers. This successful application of AND logic results in the exclusion of records associated with either specified team.

## 4. Method 2: Leveraging Array Constants and Subtraction (The OR Logic)

While Method 1 is effective for two or three exclusions, it becomes cumbersome and lengthy when you need to exclude a long list of items (e.g., ten different teams, or fifty different product codes). In such cases, repeating the criteria range and the "Not Equal To" operator ten or fifty times makes the formula unwieldy and error-prone. This is where the subtraction method, combined with array constants, offers a vastly superior, scalable alternative.

This technique flips the logic: instead of calculating what we want to include, we calculate the total sum of everything and then subtract the sum of everything we want to exclude. This uses the basic principle of subtraction to achieve the desired net total. The clever part involves using the SUMIFS function with an array constant `{...}` to calculate the sum of all excluded items in one go, thereby introducing the necessary **OR** logic for exclusion.

When you provide a criteria array (e.g., `{"Mavs", "Pacers", "Rockets"}`) to the SUMIFS function, Excel performs an implicit calculation for each item in the array, returning an array of sums (e.g., `{Sum_of_Mavs, Sum_of_Pacers, Sum_of_Rockets}`). The outer SUM function then aggregates these individual sums, giving you the total amount associated with ALL excluded teams (Mavs OR Pacers OR Rockets). By subtracting this comprehensive exclusion sum from the grand total (calculated using a simple SUM function), we efficiently arrive at the desired result.

Note that if you have a long list of values you'd like to exclude from the sum, you may instead use the following syntax:

```
=SUM(B2:B12)-SUM(SUMIFS(B2:B12,A2:A12,{"Mavs","Pacers","Rockets","Spurs"}))
```

This particular formula first calculates the grand total of values in **B2:B12** and then subtracts the combined sum of points associated with Mavs, Pacers, Rockets, or Spurs, yielding the final sum of non-excluded entries.

## 5. Preparing the Data for Conditional Analysis

Effective data analysis relies fundamentally on correctly structured input data. For conditional aggregation using functions like SUMIFS, the data must be organized into distinct, clean columns, typically referred to as ranges. One column must contain the numerical values to be summed (the sum range), and another must contain the categories or identifiers used for filtering (the criteria range). Any inconsistencies, such as misspelled team names or leading/trailing spaces, will lead to calculation errors when the formula attempts to match the exclusion criteria.

For our practical demonstration, we will utilize a simulated dataset tracking basketball statistics. This dataset includes two critical fields: the team affiliation (Criteria Range, Column A) and the points scored (Sum Range, Column B). Ensuring consistency in data entry is paramount, as the formulas rely on exact textual matches for accurate conditional checks.

Suppose we have the following dataset in Excel that shows the number of points scored by basketball players on various teams:

	A	B	C	D	E
1	<b>Team</b>	<b>Points</b>			
2	Mavs	22			
3	Nets	19			
4	Pacers	14			
5	Rockets	30			
6	Rockets	36			
7	Pacers	28			
8	Mavs	29			
9	Nuggets	40			
10	Spurs	22			
11	Celtics	18			
12	Mavs	13			
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					

In this structure, Column A (Team) serves as our criteria range (A2:A12), and Column B (Points) serves as our sum range (B2:B12). We will now apply the two distinct methodologies to exclude specific teams from the calculation of total points, starting with the simpler AND-based exclusion.

## 6. Practical Example 1: Excluding Two Specific Criteria (Method 1 in Practice)

Our first task is to calculate the total points scored by all players, excluding those who play for the **Mavs** team AND the **Pacers** team. This scenario utilizes the native AND logic of the SUMIFS function by simply including multiple criteria pairs within a single formula call. This approach is highly efficient for targeted exclusions.

We define the criteria range (A2:A12) twice, once for the exclusion of "Mavs" and once for the exclusion of "Pacers." The formula structure mandates that a row is included in the sum only if its team name simultaneously satisfies the condition of not being "Mavs" AND not being "Pacers."

We use the following formula to calculate the sum of points scored by all players who are not on the **Mavs** or **Pacers** team:

**=SUMIFS(B2:B12,A2:A12,"<>Mavs",A2:A12,"<>Pacers")**

The following screenshot shows how to use this formula in practice, yielding the resulting total:

	A	B	C	D
1	<b>Team</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Sum of Points for Team Not Equal to Mavs or Pacers</b>	
2	Mavs	22	165	
3	Nets	19		
4	Pacers	14		
5	Rockets	30		
6	Rockets	36		
7	Pacers	28		
8	Mavs	29		
9	Nuggets	40		
10	Spurs	22		
11	Celtics	18		
12	Mavs	13		
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				

We can see that the sum of points for players not on the Mavs or Pacers teams is **165**. This calculated value can be verified by manually examining the dataset and summing the points for the teams that were included (Rockets, Spurs, Heat, Warriors, Celtics, and Suns).

We can verify this is correct by manually calculating the sum of points for each player not on either of these teams:

Sum of Points:  $19 + 30 + 36 + 40 + 22 + 18 = 165$

## 7. Practical Example 2: Handling A Long List of Exclusions (Method 2 in Practice)

Now suppose that we would like to calculate the sum of points scored by all players who are not on the **Mavs, Pacers, Rockets, or Spurs**. With four or more exclusion criteria, the subtraction method utilizing Excel formulas and array constants offers a far more manageable solution than the multiple criteria approach.

This approach involves two main steps nested within the formula: first, the total sum of all points in **B2:B12** is computed. Second, the nested SUMIFS calculates the total score for all players belonging to the excluded teams defined in the array constant {"Mavs", "Pacers", "Rockets", "Spurs"}. The outer SUM function aggregates these excluded totals, and the final subtraction yields the net sum of non-excluded entries.

Here is the formula needed for this extensive exclusion list:

**=SUM(B2:B12)-SUM(SUMIFS(B2:B12,A2:A12,{"Mavs","Pacers","Rockets","Spurs"}))**

The following screenshot shows how to use this formula in practice:

The screenshot shows an Excel spreadsheet with the following data:

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	Team	Points	Sum of Points Not Equal to Mavs Pacers, Rockets or Spurs			
2	Mavs	22	77			
3	Nets	19				
4	Pacers	14				
5	Rockets	30				
6	Rockets	36				
7	Pacers	28				
8	Mavs	29				
9	Nuggets	40				
10	Spurs	22				
11	Celtics	18				
12	Mavs	13				
13						
14						
15						
16						

The formula bar shows the formula: `=SUM(B2:B12)-SUM(SUMIFS(B2:B12,A2:A12,{"Mavs","Pacers","Rockets","Spurs"}))`

We can see that the sum of points for players not on the Mavs, Pacers, Rockets or Spurs teams is **77**. This result is achieved by subtracting the aggregated sum of all points scored by the excluded teams from the grand total.

We can verify this is correct by manually calculating the sum of points for each player not on any of these teams:

Sum of Points:  $19 + 40 + 18 = 77$

This calculated value matches the result derived from the complex array formula, demonstrating the efficiency and accuracy of the subtraction method for managing multiple exclusion criteria.

## 8. Conclusion: Choosing the Right Exclusion Strategy

Selecting the appropriate method for implementing "Not Equal To" multiple criteria in Excel hinges primarily on the volume of items you need to exclude. For scenarios involving only two or three distinct values, Method 1, which employs multiple `criteria_range`, "`<>Value`" pairs within a single SUMIFS function, offers high readability and direct implementation of AND logic.

Conversely, when dealing with a large and potentially growing list of exceptions (four criteria or more), Method 2--using the subtraction of an array-driven SUMIFS from the total SUM--is dramatically more scalable and maintainable. This technique elegantly bypasses the limitations of the standard SUMIFS structure by utilizing array constants to perform complex OR logic exclusions efficiently.

Mastery of both these techniques ensures that you can handle virtually any conditional summation requirement, moving beyond simple inclusion criteria to sophisticated exclusion logic, thereby significantly enhancing your capacity for precise data analysis and reporting in Excel.