

How to Calculate a Date 90 Days in the Future with Excel

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Calculating future dates based on a specific number of days is a common requirement for project management, financial forecasting, and deadline tracking within Excel. Fortunately, the spreadsheet application handles date arithmetic seamlessly, allowing users to determine the date 90 days from a starting point using several reliable methods. Understanding these methods—ranging from simple addition to sophisticated built-in functions—is essential for accurate scheduling.

The most straightforward technique involves treating dates as sequential numbers, which is how Excel stores them internally. By employing the basic addition operator, you can easily project a future date. For instance, if you know the starting date, simply adding 90 days to that cell reference will yield the target date. While this method is highly efficient for general date calculation, it provides a total chronological day count and does not automatically account for weekends or holidays.

Alternatively, users can leverage specialized time and date functions like the **DATE function** or the **EDATE function**. While adding 90 to the day component of a manually constructed date using `=DATE(Year, Month, Day) + 90` is possible, simpler cell reference addition is usually preferred. The **EDATE function**, however, offers a powerful alternative by focusing on month increments. Since 90 days is approximately three months, using `=EDATE(Start_Date, 3)` provides a quick estimate for quarterly projections, although precision is crucial to verify as months vary in length.

Core Methods for Calculating Future Dates in Excel

When establishing deadlines or analyzing long-term project timelines, accurately projecting a date 90 days into the future is essential. Excel provides two primary categories of formulas to achieve this: calculation based on total calendar days, and calculation based on working (business) days. Both methods rely on different sets of built-in functionality designed for specific business needs and reporting standards.

Calculating Future Dates Based on Calendar Days

The simplest and most direct approach for determining a date 90 calendar days from a specified starting point utilizes basic date arithmetic. Since dates are stored internally as sequential serial numbers, you only need to add the desired number of days (90) to the cell containing the initial date reference. This method is mathematically straightforward and universally applicable across all versions of Excel.

Method 1: Calculate 90 Calendar Days from Specific Date using Direct Addition

=A2+90

This simple addition formula, applied here to cell **A2**, instructs Excel to increment the date by exactly 90 total days, regardless of weekends, national holidays, or any other non-working days. This method is ideal when the chronological passage of time is the main metric for tracking.

Calculating Future Dates Based on Business Days

For scenarios involving professional deadlines, intricate project scheduling, or contract termination dates, it is typically necessary to exclude non-working days. This requires employing the powerful **WORKDAY function** in Excel. This essential function automatically skips standard weekends (Saturdays and Sundays), ensuring the resulting date falls on a valid working day.

Method 2: Calculate 90 Business Days from Specific Date using WORKDAY

=WORKDAY(A2, 90)

This specific example calculates the date that is 90 **business days** after the starting date listed in cell **A2**. It is critical to note the strict default definition used by the **WORKDAY function**.

Note on Business Days: In the standard usage of the **WORKDAY function** without optional arguments, **business days** are defined strictly as the weekdays between Monday and Friday, automatically excluding Saturday and Sunday. If you need to include custom holidays, you would utilize the optional third argument () within the **WORKDAY function** reference.

Setting Up the Data for Date Calculations

To clearly illustrate the tangible differences between calculating 90 calendar days versus 90 **business days**, we will use a common structured dataset scenario. Imagine you have a list of crucial project start dates or contract initiation dates recorded in Column A, and your objective is to determine the exact deadline date 90 days later, which will be calculated in Column B. We must set up our data sheet precisely before applying the relevant formulas to achieve accurate comparative results.

The following structured table provides the initial list of dates we will reference in subsequent examples for both methods:

	A	B	C	D	
1	Date				
2	1/1/2024				
3	1/5/2024				
4	2/17/2024				
5	3/24/2024				
6	4/1/2024				
7	5/16/2024				
8	6/1/2024				
9	8/12/2024				
10	10/15/2024				
11	11/26/2024				
12	12/1/2024				
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					

Column A serves as our consistent reference column, containing various starting dates across different quarters of the year. By comparing the output generated in Column B using the simple addition method against the output using the WORKDAY method, we gain a clear understanding of the operational impact of date calculation methodologies in Excel. This detailed visualization is fundamental to making informed decisions about which method is most appropriate for organizational reporting or tracking needs.

Calculating 90 Calendar Days Using Simple Addition

In scenarios where every passing day, including all weekends and holidays, contributes to the fulfillment of the 90-day period, the straightforward cell addition method is the preferred and most logical approach. This technique fundamentally treats the date in cell **A2** as its numerical serial date equivalent and adds the integer 90 to it. This results in the date exactly 90 days following the start date, regardless of any weekly structure.

To execute this calculation, we input the following basic formula into cell **B2**. This instruction tells Excel to retrieve the numerical date value from **A2** and advance it by 90 sequential days:

=A2+90

Once the formula is correctly entered into cell **B2**, the efficiency of Excel's autofill functionality is

utilized to complete the remaining calculations. We click and drag the fill handle (the small square icon located at the bottom-right corner of cell B2) down through the entire range corresponding to the dates in Column A. This action instantly and accurately applies the `+90` logic to every date entry.

B2 ✕ ✓ <i>fx</i> =A2+90				
	A	B	C	D
1	Date	90 Days from Date		
2	1/1/2024	3/31/2024		
3	1/5/2024	4/4/2024		
4	2/17/2024	5/17/2024		
5	3/24/2024	6/22/2024		
6	4/1/2024	6/30/2024		
7	5/16/2024	8/14/2024		
8	6/1/2024	8/30/2024		
9	8/12/2024	11/10/2024		
10	10/15/2024	1/13/2025		
11	11/26/2024	2/24/2025		
12	12/1/2024	3/1/2025		
13				
14				
15				

The resulting dates populated throughout column B represent the exact calendar date 90 days after the respective start date in column A. This method guarantees absolute mathematical accuracy based on the standard Gregorian calendar, ignoring any potential constraints imposed by weekend days.

Reviewing the specific results obtained through this calendar addition confirms the output:

The date 90 days after **January 1, 2024** (A2) is calculated as **March 31, 2024**.

The date 90 days after **January 5, 2024** (A3) is determined to be **April 4, 2024**.

The date 90 days after **February 17, 2024** (A4) lands precisely on **May 17, 2024**.

This simple arithmetic addition serves as the foundational method for all date calculations in Excel that require a raw count of sequential days elapsed.

Projecting Deadlines Using the WORKDAY Function

In modern professional environments, project completion timelines, legal notification periods, and

financial payment deadlines are almost always measured in **business days**, which systematically exclude all weekends and often observed national holidays. To accurately calculate a future date 90 working days away, we must employ the specialized **WORKDAY function**. This function is specifically engineered to handle calendar gaps imposed by standard non-working days.

The standard syntax for the **WORKDAY function** requires two mandatory arguments: the **start_date** and the **days** to advance (90 in this case). It calculates the future date by skipping Saturday and Sunday immediately. If your business observes specific holidays, those dates can and should be supplied as an optional third argument (), ensuring unparalleled precision in your scheduling projections.

To calculate the working-day deadline for our sample dates, we enter the following precise formula into cell **B2**. This instructs Excel to find the date 90 working days after the date specified in **A2**:

=WORKDAY(A2, 90)

After successfully inputting the formula into **B2**, we once again leverage the click-and-drag method to efficiently apply the **WORKDAY function** calculation across all remaining rows in Column B. Given that the function must skip approximately two non-working days for every five calculated working days, the resultant date will be significantly later than the date generated by the simple calendar addition method presented in Example 1.

B2 ✕ ✓ fx =WORKDAY(A2, 90)				
	A	B	C	D
1	Date	90 Business Days from Date		
2	1/1/2024	5/6/2024		
3	1/5/2024	5/10/2024		
4	2/17/2024	6/21/2024		
5	3/24/2024	7/26/2024		
6	4/1/2024	8/5/2024		
7	5/16/2024	9/19/2024		
8	6/1/2024	10/4/2024		
9	8/12/2024	12/16/2024		
10	10/15/2024	2/18/2025		
11	11/26/2024	4/1/2025		
12	12/1/2024	4/4/2025		
13				
14				
15				
16				

Each cell in column B now provides the precise date that is 90 **business days** following the corresponding start date in column A. Observing the output demonstrates that these deadlines often extend a full month or more past the calendar-day results, highlighting the significant impact of excluding weekends on extended project schedules.

Reviewing the calculated dates confirms the adjusted timeline required by counting only weekdays:

90 **business days** after **1/1/2024** falls on **May 6, 2024**.

90 **business days** after **1/5/2024** results in **May 10, 2024**.

90 **business days** after **2/17/2024** is projected to be **June 21, 2024**.

The deliberate use of **WORKDAY** ensures that the final calculated date is always suitable for formal business operations and project deadlines.

Handling Potential Output Errors: Date Formatting

When working with date arithmetic formulas in Excel, particularly when using functions like **WORKDAY** or simple addition, it is highly common for the resulting output to initially appear as a large integer (a serial number) rather than a recognizable date format (e.g., 45412 instead of 5/6/2024). This phenomenon occurs because Excel fundamentally stores dates internally as serial numbers representing the number of days elapsed since January 1, 1900.

Note #1: If the formula returns a numeric value, you must manually adjust the cell formatting to display a date. This essential formatting task is achieved by selecting the calculated cells, navigating to the **Number Format** dropdown menu (usually found within the 'Number' group on the **Home** tab of the ribbon interface), and then clicking **Short Date** or **Long Date**. This action correctly instructs Excel to interpret the underlying serial number as a calendar date, which is crucial for readability and compliance with typical date reporting standards.

Advanced Considerations and Function Documentation

While the **WORKDAY function** is highly effective for calculating deadlines based on the standard five-day work week, sophisticated scheduling often requires flexibility regarding weekend definition (e.g., if Friday and Saturday constitute the weekend). For these specialized needs, Excel offers the **WORKDAY.INTL function**, which allows the user to define exactly which days of the week are considered non-working days.

Note #2: For users who require deeper customization, including defining specific organizational holiday schedules or unique regional weekend patterns, consulting the official Microsoft documentation is highly recommended. You can find the complete documentation for the **WORKDAY function** and its international counterpart online, which provides comprehensive

explanations of all optional arguments and specific use cases.

Alternative Approach: Calculating 90 Days Using the EDATE Function

Although not mathematically precise for calculating exactly 90 days due to inherent month length variability, the **EDATE function** offers an exceptionally clean method for calculating dates based on fixed month intervals. Since 90 days closely approximates three months, this function is frequently used for determining quarterly deadlines or projections based on calendar months. The function requires a **start_date** and the number of months to advance.

For example, if the starting date is **January 1, 2021**, the formula `=EDATE("1/1/2021", 3)` calculates the date exactly three months later, which yields **April 1, 2021**. This result differs slightly from the exact 90-day count, emphasizing that **EDATE** is focused on monthly anniversaries. Using **EDATE** is highly beneficial when the end-of-month alignment is critical, as it ensures the calculated date lands on the same day number of the new month, or automatically adjusts to the last day of the month if the original day number exceeds the new month's length.

The key distinction lies in application: while `=A2+90` calculates the precise 90th day elapsed, `=EDATE(A2, 3)` calculates the date three months from the start date. Users must select the function based on whether their requirement is for a fixed number of calendar days or a fixed number of months to pass.

Conclusion: Choosing the Right Excel Date Function

Mastering date calculations in Excel is fundamental for accurate planning and reporting across all industries. Whether your business requirements dictate a strictly chronological count using simple addition (`=A2+90`) or a schedule that rigorously respects standard weekends using the **WORKDAY function** (`=WORKDAY(A2, 90)`), Excel provides robust tools for both scenarios. Always double-check that the cell containing the resulting formula is explicitly formatted as a date to avoid displaying confusing serial numbers.

For those managing complex international projects or requiring higher degrees of scheduling specificity, it is beneficial to investigate related advanced functions such as **NETWORKDAYS** (used to count the number of business days between two dates) and **WORKDAY.INTL** (for custom weekend definitions and holiday lists). These functions collectively offer the necessary control and flexibility for highly granular time tracking and deadline management.

The methodologies detailed in this guide provide the complete toolkit for efficiently projecting a 90-day period from any given starting date, thereby significantly improving the accuracy and professionalism of your spreadsheet data management practices.

The following tutorials explain how to perform other common operations in Excel:

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