

1. If you type an exceptionally long text entry into a cell, the Formula bar may not show all the text. To display more of the text in the Formula bar, click the bottom of the Formula bar and drag down to increase the height. Also useful is the Ctrl+Shift+U keyboard shortcut. Pressing this key combination toggles the height of the formula bar to show either one row, or the previous size.

2. Automatically moving the cell pointer after entering data

By default, Excel automatically moves the cell pointer to the next cell down when you press the Enter key after entering data into a cell. To change this setting, choose File ⇨ Options and click the Advanced tab. The check box that controls this behavior is labeled After Pressing Enter, Move Selection. If you enable this option, you can choose the direction in which the cell pointer moves (down, left, up, or right). Your choice is completely a matter of personal preference. I prefer to keep this option turned off. When entering data, I use the navigation keys rather than the Enter key.

3. Selecting a range of input cells before entering data

Here's a tip that most Excel users don't know about: When a range of cells is selected, Excel automatically moves the cell pointer to the next cell in the range when you press Enter. If the selection consists of multiple rows, Excel moves down the column; when it reaches the end of the selection in the column, it moves to the first selected cell in the next column. To skip a cell, just press Enter without entering anything. To go backward, press Shift+Enter. If you prefer to enter the data by rows rather than by columns, press Tab rather than Enter. Excel continues to cycle through the selected range until you select a cell outside of the range.

4. Using AutoCorrect for shorthand data entry

You can use the AutoCorrect feature to create shortcuts for commonly used words or phrases. For example, if you work for a company named Consolidated Data Processing Corporation, you can create an AutoCorrect entry for an abbreviation, such as *cdp*. Then, whenever you type *cdp*, Excel automatically changes it to Consolidated Data Processing Corporation. Excel includes quite a few built-in AutoCorrect terms (mostly common is spellings), and you can add your own. To set up your custom AutoCorrect entries, access the Excel Options dialog box (choose File ⇨ Options) and click the Proofing tab. Then click the AutoCorrect Options button to display the AutoCorrect dialog box. In the dialog box, click the AutoCorrect tab, check the option labeled Replace Text as You Type, and then enter your custom entries. You can set up as many custom entries as you like. Just be careful not to use an abbreviation that might appear normally in your text.