

AutoClustering Your Autosomal DNA Matches

By Sara Allen

Major websites:

- MyHeritage DNA – Only available with MyHeritage DNA matches
- Genetic Affairs (\$) – Available with MyHeritage, 23andme and FTDNA matches - <https://geneticaffairs.com/>
- DNAGedcom (\$) – Available with MyHeritage, 23andme and FTDNA matches <https://www.dnagedcom.com/>
- Not available for Ancestry DNA matches

What is Autoclustering?

Clustering is sorting your DNA matches into groups of related matches – usually descended from common ancestor couples.

- Example: AncestryDNA allows clustering of matches using colored dots to sort into family groups
- Normally, you can cluster your own DNA matches, manually, checking each match one by one and identifying the common ancestor couple and shared matches

AutoClustering = Allowing the tools at MyHeritage DNA, Genetic Affairs and DNAGedcom to automatically sort your matches for you and place them in color sorted clusters of related matches, usually descended from common ancestor couples

- This takes the place of manual sorting each match one by one, and makes the process much faster
- Each company provides you with an html file (graphic) and csv file (spreadsheet) of your clusters
- Save these files to your computer and open them to view

Graphic (matrix) of the clusters explained

- Each same Colored square = cluster of matches, all descended from common ancestor couples in same family line (could be from the husband or wife's side or both)
- Everyone in the cluster is a match to the test taker; most persons in the cluster match others in the cluster
- Grid pattern shows the name of the matches in that cluster at the top of the grid and along the left side
- Each cell in the matrix is an intersection between 2 of the matches (read the grid across and down)
- If the cell is colored in, then the 2 matches are "shared" or "in common with" one another
- If the cell is blank, then those 2 matches are "not shared" or "not in common with" one another
- The website has determined that the group is descended a shared ancestor couple or couples
- Your job is to identify that ancestor couple or set of couples that this cluster descends from

Identifying the shared ancestor couple or couples

- Start with a cluster where you recognize the name of a match as a relative of yours
- Examine your tree to determine your relationship to the known match. Jot down the family names in that branch of the tree and the localities where these families lived
- Construct a tree showing your relationship to the known matches

- Go through the rest of the members of the cluster. Look at their trees. Look for the same surnames or localities in your tree
- Try to place these new matches on your tree for the cluster
- For those matches with no trees or limited trees
 - Try to research their tree yourself using Ancestry, FamilySearch, MyHeritage etc. to fill in the names, dates and places
 - Try to go back 5-6 generations if possible, as the shared ancestor couple could be 4th or 5th great grandparents
 - If no tree, contact the match to see if they will share information with you. Or Google their name and try to figure out their parent's names, and work on their tree yourself
 - Can you link any of these matches to the tree for this cluster?
- If you have identified the connections with several of the matches, you can determine that the cluster is related to you through a certain set of shared ancestors or several couples on the same branch of your tree
- The unidentified matches are also from that branch. Finding out exactly how they are all related could help you break down some brick walls on your tree

Repeat the process with each of your clusters

Not every cluster can be identified at first

- Re-run your cluster report every 6 months to pick up new matches that may unlock the secret of the cluster!

This process may be helpful to adoptees or those with unknown family members