

This guide covers the Family Finder autosomal DNA test offered at FamilyTreeDNA. It will help you decipher the information on your match page, identify and teach you to use the most powerful tools, and introduce some lesser-known tools that could impact your family history research.

Getting Started



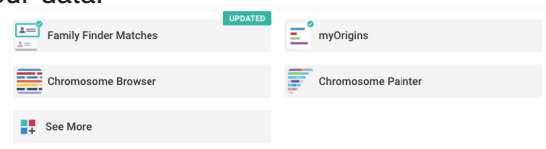
Link Your Family Tree Having your family tree linked to your account is good genealogical etiquette and *very* helpful when you are corresponding with matches as they can see what you already know. FamilyTreeDNA has partnered with MyHeritage to host family trees. [Follow the instructions](#) to either migrate your existing tree to MyHeritage or begin a new tree at MyHeritage and link it to your DNA results at FTDNA.

Surnames Import the surnames from your tree to the Earliest Known Ancestors section of your match page (see letter I, next page) by scrolling down the *Tree Management page* and clicking *Import*. This can help you quickly find shared surnames with your matches. To add them manually, click your *name* in

the upper right corner > *Account Settings* > *Genealogy* and select the *Surnames* tab. Enter up to 8 generations.

Fill out Beneficiary Information Designate who can manage your account should something happen to you by clicking on your *name* > *Account Settings* > *Account Information* > *Beneficiary Information*.

Check Your Privacy and Sharing Settings Under *Account Settings* > *Privacy and Sharing*, choose among several ways to ensure you are comfortable with the ways others can view your data.



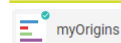
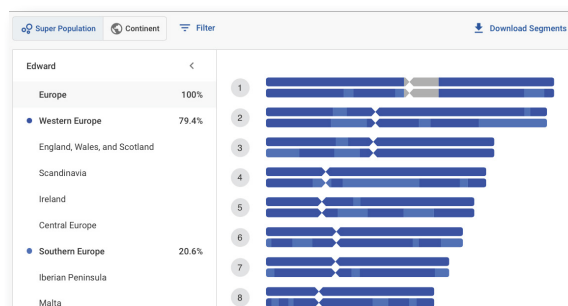
Dashboard

When you log in to FTDNA you will see your options for exploring your test laid out in the *Dashboard*. In this guide, we highlight several menu items that may be helpful in your family history efforts. But we will spend most of our time in the *Family Finder Matches* section.

- 90 population clusters are available in myOrigins.
- Under *Compare Origins*, click the pin icon to map out ancestral locations of your matches' earliest known paternal and/or maternal matches.
- Then click the funnel icon to filter which matches' map pins should be shown. Click the arrows to sort your match list alphabetically or by relationship.

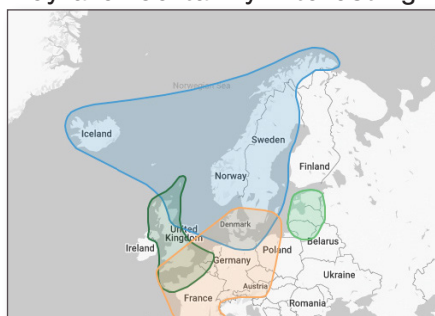
ancientOrigins The ancientOrigins tool can be found by clicking *See More* > *ancientOrigins*. This tool shows what percentage of your DNA could have been inherited from various ancient European populations, based on DNA discovered at the listed archaeological sites.

Chromosome Painter This tool allows you to visualize the portions of each of your chromosomes associated with specific populations and ethnic groups. You can compare the locations listed with those shared with your DNA matches and possibly gain some insight into which line in your family tree may connect you to each match.

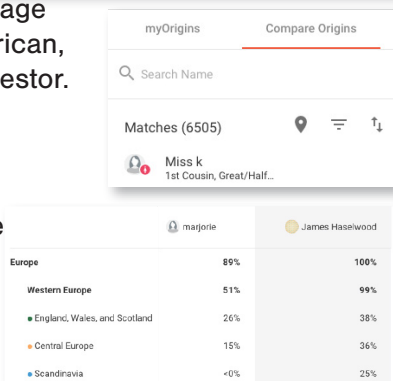


myOrigins

For many people the myOrigins results are just a pretty picture. They are certainly interesting but do not usually reveal useful genealogical information. There are exceptions to this rule for those who might be searching for evidence of a particular kind of heritage such as a Native American, African, or Jewish ancestor.



Opting in to sharing your myOrigins results with your matches will activate the *Compare Origins* tab in the myOrigins section that tells you a little about the heritage of your matches. You can use this feature to target the genealogical lines in your match's pedigree chart that are most likely to contain individuals from a common location.



Matches - Plan of Attack

Your Best Matches are those genetic cousins who are most likely to be able to help you in your family history. Use the image on the right and the corresponding letters in the text to follow the top strategies to make DNA connections. Note that you can toggle between the

Table View shown here and the default Detail View **B**.

1. Use Surnames and Locations

Shared Ancestral Surnames FTDNA will compare the surnames you entered to the surnames your matches have entered. Click on View Details **I** to see those shared surnames. Your best matches are those with shared surnames and/or locations.

Search by Surnames/Locations If you don't want to page through your matches looking for common surnames, you can use the search field **A** to specifically seek out particular surnames.

2. Utilize Tools on the Match Page

Clicking on your match's name **D** will bring up additional details, including their email address and a place to take notes about any correspondence or discoveries you have made about your relationship.

Relationship Range The point of the *Relationship Range* **E** is to find your Generation of Connection: the generation in your match's family tree that holds your common ancestor. So you should try to translate your relationship range into possible shared ancestors. For example, a 2nd Cousin - 3rd Cousin would have a Generation of Connection at your great grandparents or your 2X great grandparents.

This relationship range is based on the total number of shared centimorgans (cM) **F**, which is a unit of measure for DNA, and also on the number and size of the segments shared. Having ten small segments equaling 40 cM is not the same as having two large segments that add up to 40 cM. The size of your largest shared segment is also displayed **G**. To help you stay focused on your Best Matches, you should only evaluate matches whose longest block is greater than 15 cM. Keep in mind that in general, FamilyTreeDNA tends to overestimate your relationship, meaning they tell you that you are 2nd-4th cousins, when it is possible you are more likely to be 3rd-5th cousins. You can use the [Shared Centimorgan Project](#) to check average amounts

of shared DNA associated with various relationships to further refine your predictions.

Both the [Shared cM Project](#) and our [Finding an Ancestor Using Your DNA](#) reference guide can help you figure out how you are connected with your match. But be careful; more than just the total amount of shared DNA is taken into consideration to determine your actual genealogical connection. You also need to take into account the genealogical evidence. For example, two people sharing 1700 cM could be half siblings, or aunt and nephew. You have to do genealogy to find out which one.

Link on Family Tree

You can use the *Link on Family Tree* link to add a known match to their rightful place on your MyHeritage family tree. If you link someone who is your first cousin or closer the Paternal, Maternal, or Both filters **J** will be activated and icons will be added next to the appropriate match names in the table.

Filter

Clicking on the filter **C** will allow you to filter your match list by those who have a family tree, and by the kind of test(s) they have completed. Consider using this tool to investigate others who have taken YDNA or mtDNA tests, which may prove helpful in determining your relationship.

3. The Common Matches Tool

The *Common Matches* tool **H** is accessed by clicking on the person icon in the Actions column. It is the most powerful tool at FamilyTreeDNA and has two parts: *Not In Common*, and *In Common*. The *Not In Common* tool shows a list of matches who do not share DNA with a selected match. For example, if Match A is your mom, when you click the *Not In Common* button associated with that match, you will see a list of other individuals who do have DNA in common with you, but DO NOT have DNA in common with Match A (your mom). That means all those listed should be related to your dad.

The *In Common* tool operates on a similar principle.

When you select Match B and choose the *In Common* option, the tool generates a list of matches who share DNA with both you and Match B.

When looking at this new shared match list be careful not to assume that everyone on the match list is related through a single common ancestor just because they share DNA with both you and match B. However, those at the top of the Shared Matches list are more likely to be related to you and your selected match through the same shared ancestor.

Note: The other items in the *Actions* column are the pedigree icon that, when dark, indicates your match has posted a family tree, and the notes icon.

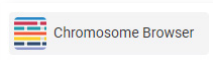
4. Explore Other Tools

Once you are familiar with the layout and information provided on the *Matches* page, you are ready to advance to the genetic tools.

Linked Relationships You can access this tool by clicking *Link to Family Tree* in your match list, as we discussed previously. At its heart, this feature is just a filter to help you broadly categorize how you are related to your DNA matches.

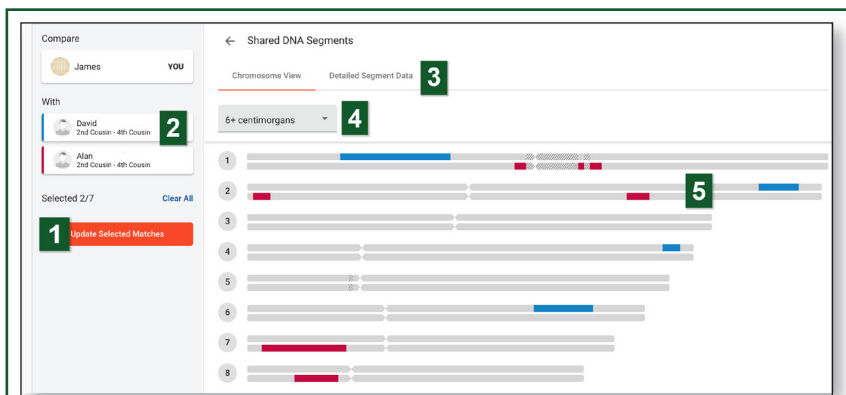
Once you have determined how a match is related to you, *Link Matches* allows you to link that person to your family tree. When you click on *Link to Family Tree*, a search box appears, allowing you to search by name for an individual in your MyHeritage Family Tree. Those with matching names will be displayed, along with each person's relationship to you and their birth and death years, if available. After you select the person of interest, the linked relationship will then be shown on your FamilyTreeDNA match page. No indication of the connection will appear on your MyHeritage Family Tree.

Wherever possible, assign at least one close DNA match to your tree. (One from each side of your family is even better.) A close match is a sibling, aunt/uncle, or first cousin. Doing so will activate the Paternal/Maternal/Both tool **J** which will populate many of your matches with icons **K** showing whether they are most likely related to your mom's side, your dad's side, or both. This assignment is based on the relationships you provide plus everyone's common matches.



Chromosome Browser This tool allows you to see the physical locations

on each chromosome where you share DNA with selected matches. You can access the chromosome browser tool from the main menu on your home page or directly from your match list. To use the chromosome browser, click on the box next to the name of a match of interest **L** (select up to 7 matches

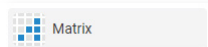


Chromosome Browser

1. Click here to select different matches for the chromosome browser.
2. The matches currently in the browser - each assigned a different color.
3. Choose Detailed Segment Data to see your match information in a table.
4. Adjust the size of the DNA pieces you want to see.
5. Each colored bar represents a piece of DNA you share and that may have come from your common ancestor.

at a time) and then click the *Compare Matches* button that will appear at the bottom of your screen.

Some people use the chromosome browser to find multiple individuals who are sharing the same exact piece of DNA, concluding that this shared piece indicates a shared ancestor. But a shared segment does not always mean a shared ancestor. Overlapping segments can be present because of a shared ancestor (IBD or Identical by Descent), or because of a common population group (IBS or Identical by State). You can only know for sure if you are able to identify a common ancestor in your pedigree charts, but sometimes there are genetic clues as well. One clue is the size of the shared segment. Clicking on any segment in the chromosome browser will reveal its size. The pop-up window will include an entry for Shared DNA. That number indicates how many centimorgans (cM) of DNA you and your match share in that location. In general, if multiple people are sharing a piece of DNA that is smaller than 15 cM, that piece is more likely to represent a shared ancestral location than a shared recent common ancestor.



Matrix The Matrix tool allows you to quickly compare the DNA of various

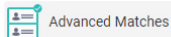
matches to each other. For example, let's say you use the *In Common* tool with your match Mary and in the resulting list you see James and Sandra. Because they show up in the ICW list, you know that James and Sandra share DNA with Mary. But if you want to know if James and Sandra share DNA with each other, you have to run the ICW tool again, this time choosing James, and look for Sandra on the resulting list. Sound

like a lot of work? It is! That is why you use the *Matrix* tool to accomplish this same task easily. To use the *Matrix* tool, follow these steps:

- Make note of the names of the matches you want to investigate.
- From the top menu bar, navigate to Results & Tools > Autosomal DNA > Matrix.
- Start typing the name of a match of interest in the box, last name first, then select them and click *Add*. Repeat until all matches of interest have been added to the list.
- Those with a blue check mark share DNA with one another. They are, therefore, likely related to each other. You and these two matches may share a common ancestor.

Matrix Matches				
	k	David	Gary	Bethany
k				
David	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Bethany	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

This person is identified as a match.

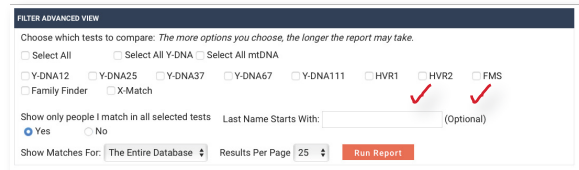


5. Advanced Matches Tool

If you have had your YDNA or mtDNA tested at FamilyTreeDNA, you can use the *Advanced Matches* tool to help you better determine how you are related to your YDNA or mtDNA matches who have also taken the *Family Finder* test. Use the following steps to try out this tool:

1. On the main dashboard, scroll down to Advanced Matches under Additional Tests & Tools.

2. Select which tests you want FamilyTreeDNA to search. For example, if you have taken the mtDNA test, and you see several of your Full Mitochondrial Sequence Matches (abbreviated FMS here) have taken the autosomal DNA test, click on the box next to FMS, and then on the box next to Family Finder.
3. Click *Run Report*. In the resulting list are individuals who are matching you on both the mtDNA FMS test and the autosomal DNA Family Finder test. Noticing which of your matches are (or are not) on the list tells you something about your connection. If they are not on the list, but match you on your mtDNA, that tells you that your connection is likely at the 3rd cousin level or further back, as 2nd cousins always share autosomal DNA.



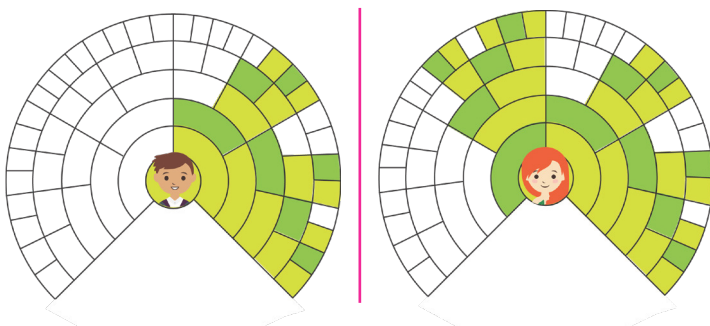
If a match is sharing both mtDNA and autosomal DNA, the autosomal DNA tells you how many generations back you can expect to find a common ancestor (for 3rd cousins, you would look for a connection in your 2X great grandparents) and the mtDNA tells you that connection is on your direct maternal line.

6. X Chromosome Filter

Your match list has an X-match column **M** that you can click on to sort by numerical value to see who may be sharing some XDNA with you.

X chromosome DNA (XDNA) has a unique inheritance pattern in that you can only inherit XDNA from specific ancestors. When XDNA is shared it might give you clues as to which of your family lines might hold the common ancestor between you and a match.

The images here show how XDNA is inherited. The light



green are women, and the dark green are men while the white ancestors do not contribute any XDNA.

You can see that a man gets his XDNA only from his mother, as his father's side is completely white. That makes this filter especially powerful for men as men who

share XDNA with you should be related to you on their maternal line.

Female matches are more difficult to interpret, but using these charts can help narrow down your lines of inheritance.

Beware of small segments! Shared XDNA less than 10 cM may not be relied on to provide the insight we are looking for. Use the chromosome browser (see page 3) to ensure you have a longest shared piece of at least 10 cM.

7. Download Raw Data

To download your raw data for uploading to MyHeritage or LivingDNA, click *Results & Tools > Autosomal DNA > Download Raw Data*.

Next Steps:

[Keep up with FTDNA](#)

[Explore YDNA Testing at FTDNA](#)

[Explore mtDNA testing at FTDNA](#)