

# DNA Matching Guide: Tools to Work With Your Matches

Want to maximize your DNA results and start exploring your matches in a whole new way? Use this quick guide to review the tools you can use to work with your DNA matches, plus a few new features that you won't want to miss.

## Matching Features

Using the matching tools is a must for getting the most out of your DNA test results. Here are eight steps for finding success with your AncestryDNA matches:

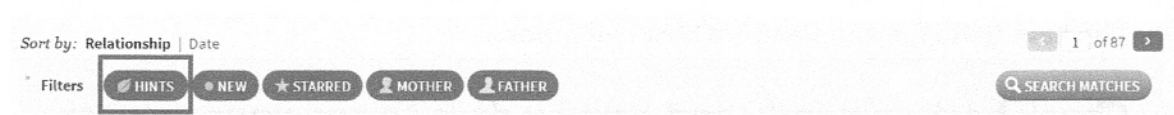
### 1. Make sure your test is attached to a tree.



AncestryDNA reveals cousin matches whether you have attached a test to an online tree or not. However, in order to understand more about those cousin matches and encourage them to work with you to uncover your common ancestors, you need to attach your AncestryDNA test to a public tree on Ancestry.com. Check to make sure your test is attached to the correct person in your family tree by clicking on the **Settings** button on your DNA Home Page.

Are you an adoptee looking for biological family members? Create a tree with "Biological Father" and "Biological Mother" listed instead of names so that others know you are looking for biological family and not just that you don't have a family tree online.

### 2. Use the Hints feature to see cousins with whom you have an identified shared ancestor.



Once your AncestryDNA test is attached to your tree, Ancestry.com goes to work trying to identify common ancestors in your tree and the trees of your matches. Use the Hints filter to discover where a shared ancestor has been identified in your trees. Review your tree and theirs to ensure that the research is solid. If you notice any discrepancies, contact your new-found cousin and invite them to work together to figure things out.

### 3. Make notes so you can review later.

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Mei\_Mei  
Member since 2009, last logged in 3 days ago

**Predicted relationship: 4th Cousins**  
Possible range: 4th - 6th cousins ([What does this mean?](#))  
Confidence: Extremely High

Dad's maternal line. Go back and look through common surnames: Hughes and Martin.

When viewing a match page, use the Notes feature to make note of actual relationships, common ancestors, or suspected connections. Once you save these notes, you can view them from the Member Matches page without having to click through to each individual match's page. After I make a note, I click on the star to mark this match so I can quickly filter to a list of matches I've reviewed and made notations about.

### 4. Search by surname/birth location and look for patterns.

Sort by: Relationship | Date 1 of 87

Filters HINTS NEW STARRED MOTHER FATHER

SEARCH MATCHES

Search matches  
Search by surname Search by birth location Cancel

Once you've identified a match or two with the same common ancestor, spend a little time researching that family. Have you identified all of their children? Who did their daughters and granddaughters marry? Now, use the Surname Search to identify your AncestryDNA matches who also have those same surnames in their family trees.

### 5. Check back regularly and sort by date to see your newest matches.

Sort by: Relationship | Date 1 of 87

Filters HINTS NEW STARRED MOTHER FATHER

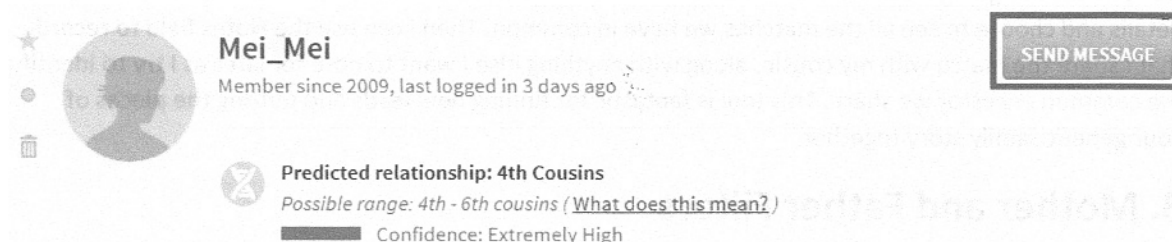
SEARCH MATCHES

Every time someone else takes the AncestryDNA test, we compare their DNA to yours to see if you are related. If they are, we add them to your list of cousin matches. (I have had 196 new

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matches in just the last 7 days.) As each of these new people build out their family trees, the possibilities of shared ancestor hints showing up increases. Check back regularly and sort your list by date to bring new matches to the top of your list. Be sure to go back to the Hints filter regularly to see what new hints have turned up as well.

### 6. Collaborate! Collaborate! Collaborate!



Mei\_Mei  
Member since 2009, last logged in 3 days ago

**Predicted relationship: 4th Cousins**  
Possible range: 4th - 6th cousins ([What does this mean?](#))  
Confidence: Extremely High

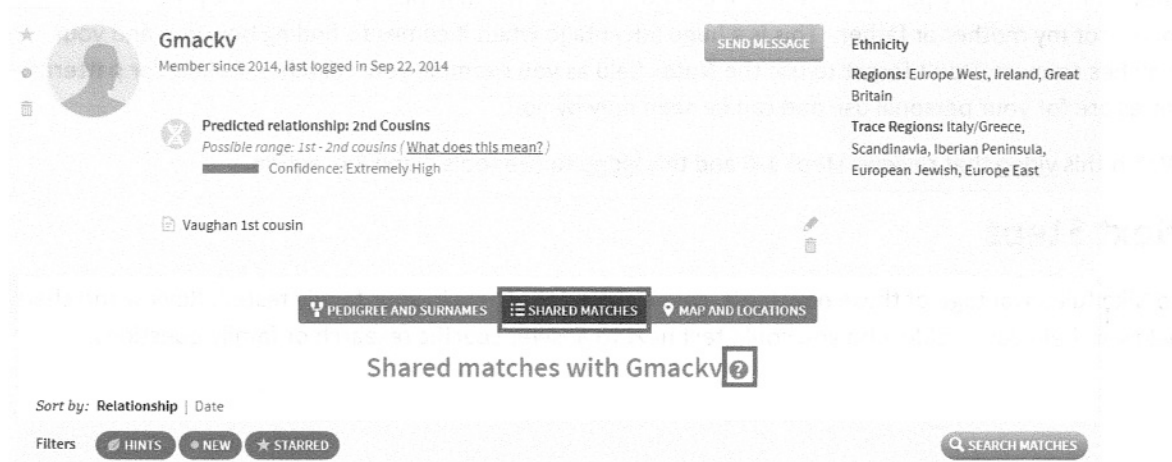
SEND MESSAGE

On the profile page for every one of your matches you will find a big green Send Message button. Use this to communicate with your matches. Introduce yourself. Ask questions about their research. Offer to share what you know. Establish a relationship. Once those lines of communication are open, you can begin working together to share additional information about your matches, looking for overlapping matches, surnames, and locations that will help you triangulate connections on your family trees. Don't forget to respond to those who reach out to you. Even if you don't have information they're asking for, send a quick response to let them know.

### 7. New Shared Matches Tool

Now that you have gone over the basics of what to do with your DNA matches, take the next two steps to do even more with your matches.

The Shared Matches tool will show you which matches you and any given match on your list share in common. The list will include 4<sup>th</sup> cousin matches or closer. When you click **View Match**, the Shared matches filter appears on the detail page for each of your matches. If you need help, click on the question mark for more information.



Gmacky  
Member since 2014, last logged in Sep 22, 2014

**Predicted relationship: 2nd Cousins**  
Possible range: 1st - 2nd cousins ([What does this mean?](#))  
Confidence: Extremely High

Vaughan 1st cousin

SEND MESSAGE

Ethnicity  
Regions: Europe West, Ireland, Great Britain  
Trace Regions: Italy/Greece, Scandinavia, Iberian Peninsula, European Jewish, Europe East

PEDIGREE AND SURNAMES SHARED MATCHES MAP AND LOCATIONS

Shared matches with Gmacky?

Sort by: Relationship | Date

Filters HINTS NEW STARRED

SEARCH MATCHES

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The Shared Matches filter generates a list of DNA matches that you and one of your DNA matches have in common. This might help you determine which family line you share or give you more evidence that you're related to a specific person or match.

For example, I have had a 1<sup>st</sup> cousin tested, and I can now see all the matches we share. From this list I can deduce that these matches might stem from a common ancestor on a particular line I share with my cousin. This is helpful for me because I have questions on that particular line (our shared grandparents). Now, instead of going back and forth between our match lists, I can simply click on my 1<sup>st</sup> cousin's match details and choose to see all the matches we have in common. Then I can use the Notes field to record that I share the match with my cousin, along with anything else I want to note for later as I try to identify the common ancestor we share. This tool is fantastic for finding new leads and putting the pieces of your genetic family story together.

### 8. Mother and Father Filters

If you have had a parent tested, you will automatically see a new filter option at the top of your match list page next to the Hints, New, and Starred filters that you should already be familiar with. You can now filter your matches by Mother or Father. That means, if you have tested your mother you can now see all the matches you share with her, narrowing down which DNA cousin matches might belong to that side of the family. Same goes for the Father Filter.

The screenshot shows the AncestryDNA match list interface. At the top, there's a 'Sort by' dropdown set to 'Relationship' and a 'Date' dropdown. Below this is a 'Filters' section with buttons for 'HINTS', 'NEW', 'STARRED', 'MOTHER', and 'FATHER'. The 'MOTHER' filter is currently selected. To the right of the filters is a 'SEARCH MATCHES' button. Below the filters, there's a 'PARENT/CHILD' section. It lists two matches: 'Bruce Swayne' (administered by swaynedna) and 'Andrea Swayne' (administered by swaynedna). For Bruce Swayne, the possible range is 'Parent, Child - immediate family member', confidence is 'Extremely High', and the relationship is 'Bruce Swayne is your Father'. For Andrea Swayne, the possible range is 'Parent, Child - immediate family member', confidence is 'Extremely High', and the relationship is 'Andrea Swayne is your Mother'. Both matches show a 'VIEW MATCH' button and the number of shared matches (380 for Bruce, 1743 for Andrea).

I have had both of my parents tested and can now filter all my matches by whether they are also a match for my mother or father. This is a huge advantage when it comes to finding how you and your matches connect. Don't forget to use the Notes field as you examine your matches looking for patterns. Notes are for your personal use and can be seen only by you.

Watch this [video](#) that reviews steps 1-6 and this [video](#) to see tools 7 and 8 in action.

### Next Steps

To take full advantage of these new tools, consider having others in your family tested. Review the chart below to help you decide who you could test next to answer specific research or family questions.



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Look at this DNA Match	To focus on this family line
Mom, dad, aunt, uncle, 1st cousin (on maternal or paternal line depending on which side you're interested in)	Maternal or paternal line ( $\frac{1}{2}$ of your tree)
Maternal grandparent or 2nd cousin	Maternal grandparent's line ( $\frac{1}{4}$ of your tree)
Paternal grandparent or 2nd cousin	Paternal grandparent's line ( $\frac{1}{4}$ of your tree)
Maternal great-grandparent or 3rd cousin	Maternal great-grandparent's ( $\frac{1}{8}$ of your tree)
Paternal great-grandparent or 3rd cousin	Paternal great-grandparent's ( $\frac{1}{8}$ of your tree)

Have fun with these new tools and good luck. Once you get familiar with them, you will start to see patterns among the cousin matches you have and may even uncover the very clue you have been waiting for.