AncestryDNA® "DNA Matches" + Enhanced Match Pro Tool

[Video Link](#)

Overview

AncestryDNA has come out with a long requested tool. It is the ability to **see how your DNA matches relate to each other**. This can be helpful when trying to assemble a family tree from DNA matches.

This will cover both an overview of the AncestryDNA® cousin matches and then dive into the new Enhanced Pro Tool to help you take this one step further in your DNA research.

As of this writing (July 2024), Pro Tools is available in the US, UK, AU, and CA.

Cost

This is an addon to your existing account called Pro Tools. As of this writing, Pro Tools is typically $10 per month in the United States. Prices vary depending on your location. This is in addition to your regular Ancestry subscription.

Note: At the RootsTech conference in February 2024, Ancestry announced they would transition their subscription model from offering country-specific and worldwide plan options to single or family plan. However, as of July 2024, this change has not yet been implemented.

Pro Tools Features

In December 2023 Ancestry rolled out their new Pro Tools. It offers **Fan Tree views, Tree Checker** (helps find errors in your tree), **Smart Filters** (list of all people in your tree), **Charts & Reports, Tree Mapper,** and **Tree Insights**. There may be more options coming soon. Ancestry tells us that it is their way of paying for all the feature upgrades that have been requested.
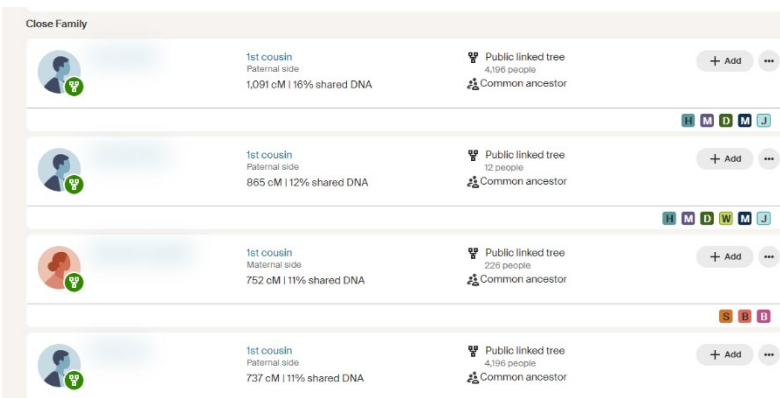
GenealogyTV.org   **You Tube**   **YouTube.com/GenealogyTV**

In June 2024 Ancestry added to the Pro Tools package the **Enhanced Matching** tool.

DNA Match Basics

Often, we call them "Cousin Matches," but that term could also mean biological parents, children, aunts, uncles as well as your biological cousins.

Assuming you have taken a **DNA test and linked it to yourself in your family tree** then you have several opportunities to use DNA cousin matches to assist with your genealogy, even *without* Pro Tools.

In short, you will get a list of all DNA Matches, cM count (Centimorgans are a unit of DNA measurement) you share with each match. Clicking on the cM count will give you an estimated relationship you have with each match.

Personally, I like the [DNAPainter Shared cM Match tool](#) better for understanding relationships. This is not a replacement for your Ancestry DNA tools but another way to see your relationships.

You can get a visualization of the possible relationships you have with any DNA match. This is a different company, but at **DNA Painter** you can see how the cM's you share can overlap with other relationships. For example, if you have, say, 250 cM's with a match you may have several possible relationships as shown here.

1 DNAPainter.com/tools/sharedcmv4

What's New at AncestryDNA

In June 2024, Ancestry added their new **Enhanced DNA Match** feature to the Pro Tools subscription, starting with the United States. In short, this allows you to see **how your DNA matches relate to each other.** Whereas *without* the Enhanced DNA Match tool, you can only see how you relate to your DNA match list. With Pro Tools, now you can see how they relate to each other **when using the Shared Matches tool**. Let me walk you through the process.

How to Get Ancestry Pro Tools with Enhanced Shared Matches

Here is a screenshot from Ancestry's help website here. In short, without Pro Tools you can only see up to three "shared" matches.

AncestryDNA® feature	Without a membership	With an Ancestry® family history membership OR AncestryDNA Plus™	With an Ancestry® family history membership AND Ancestry® Pro Tools
Shared matches	Limited up to 3 shared matches	✅	✅
Enhanced shared matches	Limited up to 3 shared matches		✅

How to Use DNA Matches without Pro Tools

Step One – Choose a DNA Match

Do this with a known DNA match from a branch of the family that you want to know more about.

Go to the DNA Matches from the DNA top menu. You should now see a list of all your DNA matches.

Click into any match by clicking on their name to see how you relate. This is best with cousins, not immediate family.

This view shows you your DNA cousins mini tree, as well as how you might be related.

On the left side it shows you the common ancestors if you both have them identified in your trees.

The green boxes show you ancestors you both have in your tree.

Looking at a Matches Tree

To see a larger tree from this DNA cousin, click the **Expand Tree** in the upper right corner.

Notice that **Janet has a small tree** online. That **does not matter** because with the **shared matches tool**, we can **explore all the trees** from the **DNA matches we both share**... from the **same branch of the family!** *This is the power of the Shared Matches tool.*

Once you have opened the **Expand Tree**, you can then go to their full tree by clicking on the **View Full Tree** link (not shown). I usually do this by opening the link in a new window, so I do not lose my place in the DNA match list.

By opening the DNA match tree completely, you can now **search their tree for ancestors** you are researching (if they have who you are looking for, in their tree). Just pay attention to what tree you are looking at (upper left corner); it is easy to get confused if your tree looks similar. **Opening your tree and theirs in separate tabs helps you to toggle between trees for comparison.**

Grouping DNA Cousins

If you know which branch of the family a DNA Cousin comes from, you can mark them with a custom group you create. Here is more on Grouping DNA Matches from the Ancestry Support page.

Step Two – Enhanced Shared Matches (Pro Tool)

Returning to the view shown below, click on the **Shared Matches** tool. This is where Pro Tools kicks in.

Above I have clicked into one of my cousins from the match list. We are going to call her Janet for the sake of privacy. On the top you can see that she is estimated to be my **First Cousin, Once Removed** (1C1R). In this case, I know the estimate is correct. "1x removed" means "once removed" which is a generational difference. She is one generation older than I am. She is my fathers first cousin. Therefore, I am a first cousin, once removed from Janet.

Shared Matches Explained

Under the screen above is a list of shared matches that we both share. What does that mean? That means everyone on the list below (next page) are matches that all have a DNA connection to the same branch of the family tree.

Janet and I both descend from Herman Madsen and Franciska Jensen. Therefore, all DNA cousins in the shared matches list either descend from that couple or from a common ancestral couple higher in the tree.

This is where knowing your "Best Known Match" from anyone branch of the tree can be helpful. Janet here, is my Best Known Match from the Madsen-Jensen couple. Also, I would like to add her to the Madsen-Jensen Group along with everyone in the shared match list.

I could then search Janets tree for clues, records, and or communicate with her to learn more.

The Big Upgrade Everyone Had Been Asking For

The big upgrade everyone had been asking for is **how that DNA cousin relates to the rest of the people in the Shared Match list.**

In the example above, Martha has a genetic connection to both me and Janet. She is a 2C1R (2nd cousin, 1 time removed) or a half 1C2R (1st cousin two times removed). Ancestry is not sure of the relationship to me. Why? Because the cM's I share with Marth is 168 which overlaps with several possible relationships.

In fact, there are more possible relationships, if we look at DNA Painters website and plug in 168. You can see all possible relationships and the percentages or likelihood of each relationship. This is why I like DNA Painter, plus it is free.

Clicking on the cM's in the Ancestry Match list will give you similar details about all possible relationships.

How is Martha Related to Janet?

As you can see in the right-hand column, she is a niece to Janet. She has a much closer relationship than I do. That means that Martha is the daughter of one of Janet's brothers. Easy, Janet only had two brothers. I could drill into either tree to see how Martha relates. In this case Martha does not have a tree. Perhaps I will reach out to either Martha or Janet and ask about the relationship if it relates to my research goal. This is just another tool we can use to help build out our tree! Like anything we do, we want to verify those relationships with traditional genealogy records whenever possible.