Tables and figures

In this section:

General guidelines for figures and tables

Use tables and figures to display results and other information about the review visually.

Each figure and table must have a caption providing a brief description (or explanation) of the table or figure and must be referred to in the review text (via a link in RevMan).

Automatic renumbering and positioning of tables and figures in the review

- **In the read-only views** generated using the options 'View' [a version] and 'Submission preview' (focused review format only), and in the PDF article, tables and figures are renumbered to reflect the position in which they are linked in the review.
- **In the published review PDF**, tables and figures are placed at the end of the paragraph in which the link appears. If a table or figure is linked more than once in the text, the second and subsequent links will point to it the first time it appears in the text. Readers need to use the browser's back button to return to the section they were navigating before being redirected.

The positioning of tables and figures cannot be previewed in RevMan.

To ensure the best presentation of published reviews (particularly in the PDF version), Cochrane reviews should not include too many figures, though no absolute limits have been set; around 10 or fewer may be sufficient for most intervention reviews, though more may be required for complex reviews, network meta-analyses (NMAs) and other review types. If there are multiple figures to import and the size of the review will be very big, please consider using an online repository instead of adding them to the review (see [Author guidelines: External data and files](#)).

Only the most important tables should remain as 'Additional tables'. Other tables should be moved to the Supplementary materials in focused-format reviews, or Appendices in long-format reviews, and referenced with a hyperlink.

Further guidelines about figures and tables are available via the RevMan [Knowledge Base](#).

Tables

In this section: [Table size](#) | [Automatic renumbering and positioning of tables in the review | Types of tables](#) | **Formatting:** [Cell alignment](#) | [Width and height](#) | [Title](#) | [Column headings](#) | [Row headings](#) | [Table body](#) | [Footnotes](#)**:** [examples](#)**;** [positioning](#)**;** [multiple footnotes](#)

Table size

For the content to display correctly when a review is published in the Cochrane Library, a table should have a maximum of 12 columns.

Tables with up to seven columns will display in the published PDF in portrait orientation. Tables with 8 to 12 columns will automatically be displayed in the published PDF in landscape orientation.

RevMan will not allow you to exceed the maximum size of 25 columns.

Automatic renumbering and positioning of tables in the review

In the read-only views generated using the options 'View' [a version] and 'Submission preview' (focused review format only), and in the PDF article, tables are renumbered to reflect the position in which they are linked in the review.

In the published review PDF, tables are placed at the end of the paragraph in which the link appears. If a table is linked more than once in the text, the second and subsequent links will point to the table at its first appearance in the text. Readers need to use the browser's back button to return to the section they were navigating before being redirected.

The positioning of tables cannot be previewed in RevMan.

Types of tables in RevMan

Tables in the main text of the review			
Table type	Description	Where to insert/edit in RevMan	Permitted formatting
Overview of included studies and syntheses (OISS table)	Give **brief** details of key study characteristics that aid readers' understanding of the results of the review, including which studies provided results for which outcomes and meta-analyses. Where it makes sense to do so, group studies according to particular characteristics, outcomes or interventions. You can add more than one table if necessary to avoid over-long tables.	In Default view, create an Additional table, and give it the title, 'Overview of included studies and syntheses'.	Same as available within main text plus heading cells, cell alignment and cell merge. Footnotes permitted
Additional tables	Used for presenting limited amounts of information in tabular format within the main body of the text.	In Default view, create an Additional table; name and fill as appropriate.	Same as available within main text plus heading cells, cell alignment, and cell merge. Footnotes permitted
Summary of findings tables	Present summary of the results for the 7 most important outcomes in the review. When the review is published, these tables follow on after the Abstract, Plain language summary and Authors' conclusions.	**Generate and edit in GRADEpro GDT** (the default setting in focused review format). Summary of findings tables will be synced with RevMan. Edit in GRADEpro GDT only. **Generate table in GRADEpro GDT and copy and paste into RevMan table**. In Default view, cliick on 'Summary of findings' in the navigation pane > 'Add table' > 'Using RevMan Web' and copy table from GRADEpro GDT. Edit in RevMan. **Generate and edit table in RevMan**. In Default view, cliick on 'Summary of findings' in the navigation pane > 'Add table' > 'Using RevMan Web'	Limited editing functions in GRADEpro GDT. (See [Knowledge Base](#)). If copied from GRADEpro GDT or generated within RevMan, same as available within main text plus heading cells, cell alignment and cell merge. Footnotes permitted

Tables in Supplementary materials			
Table type	Description	Where to insert/edit in RevMan	Permitted formatting
Characteristics of studies tables (included, excluded, ongoing, awaiting assessment)	Present the characteristics of the different types of studies. Tables for included and ongoing studies, and studies awaiting assessment, have a number of predefined attributes (methods, participants, interventions, outcomes, notes). Excluded studies tables give brief reason(s) underlying decisions to exclude studies from the review.	In Default view, select 'Studies' and desired study type. Select 'Add study' to insert a study, and 'Edit study' to edit the text. It's possible to move between tabs that document different types of information about each study using the 'Next' and 'Previous' buttons.	Same as available in main text Footnotes permitted
Risk of bias tables	Used to present risk of bias judgements and support for judgement for each study. **RoB 1** (Cochrane's original risk of bias tool) is part of the Characteristics of included studies supplementary material. **RoB 2** is presented in the Risk of bias supplementary material. (These are called 'Assessment of methodological quality tables' in diagnostic reviews.)	**RoB 1:** in Default view select Studies > Included > Edit study, then select Risk of bias from the choices at the top of the page. **RoB 2:** see Cochrane Methods	Same as available within main text Footnotes permitted
Additional tables	Only the most important tables (i.e. those that present information about the review's findings) should remain as 'Additional tables'. Other tables should be moved to the	**Generate and edit table in RevMan**. In Default view, click on 'Tables' in the navigation pane > 'Add table', then select the number of rows and columns. Type into the cells or copy and paste from outside RevMan.	Same as available in main text plus heading cells, cell alignment and cell merge. Footnotes permitted

Tables in Supplementary materials			
Table type	Description	Where to insert/edit in RevMan	Permitted formatting
	Supplementary materials in focused-format reviews, or Appendices in long-format reviews, and referenced with a hyperlink. For example, risk of bias for non-randomized studies of interventions, or a glossary of technical terms.		

Formatting options

In addition to the formatting that is available within all of the main text, some tables have three further options:

- heading cells, which applies heading style to the cell (shown as bold in RevMan);
- cell alignment, which allows a choice of horizontal and vertical alignments; and
- cell merge, which allows adjacent cells to be merged together to create a single cell.

Formatting should be consistent within a single table. As with other parts of a Cochrane review, the visual presentation of tables will change during the publication process; for example, it is important not to use the 'Enter key' within a single block of text (e.g. in a single word if the word runs over two lines) because the text layout will also change during the publication process.

Cell alignment examples

Align left	Align top
Align centre	Align middle
Align right	Align bottom

Width and height

The width and height of tables or individual cells cannot be specified. Instead, cells (and thereby row, columns, and tables) expand automatically to fit the content.

Table title

The title should be concise and reflect the table content. Use sentence case without a full stop at the end.

Column headings

Column headings should be in sentence case and formatted using 'Toggle heading/cell', which applies heading formatting to the cell. This also applies if there are nested column heads (i.e. two rows of column headings); the top heading in nested column heads is likely to be in a series of merged cells that span the relevant columns.

Horizontal alignment: in general, the heading cells should be left-aligned. If the table contains nested column heads (see above), then the top row should be centre-aligned.

Vertical alignment: column headings should be bottom-aligned (instead of top- or middle-aligned).

Row headings

Tables may or may not have headings for each row. If so, these should be in sentence case and formatted using 'Toggle heading/cell', which applies heading formatting to the cell.

Horizontal alignment: the row headings should be left-aligned unless there is good reason to do otherwise.

Vertical alignment: in general, row headings should be top-aligned.

Table body

Use sentence case if the content is all or mainly text. Use numbers instead of words in tables (see Exceptions to basic rules for numbers and ordered events less than 10). Only use full stops to end blocks of text when the block ends with a full sentence. It is customary to use a dash (en-dash) when writing ranges in tables but it is acceptable to write 'to' as long as the style is consistent within and across tables. For example, 10 mg-20 mg or 10 mg to 20 mg.

Horizontal alignment: in general, the body cells should be left-aligned.

Vertical alignment: vertical alignment of the body cells should be top (instead of middle or bottom). There may be occasions when the cells should be bottom-aligned, but this should only be done when it makes sense visually.

Blank cells: avoid blank cells in a table. Insert an em-dash or ellipsis if the column heading does not apply to the cell, or use NA (not applicable) or ND (no data available) if a distinction is needed. Remember to explain these two abbreviations in the footnotes.

Footnotes

Footnotes are a convenient way to define abbreviations and acronyms or display other explanatory notes (see [Examples of table footnotes](#) below). Use superscript lower-case letters to denote footnotes. Where a footnote symbol follows punctuation, place the footnote symbol immediately after the punctuation mark unless it is a dash or closing bracket. Where a footnote refers to a specific point within a sentence, place the footnote symbol immediately after the relevant phrase (see [Examples of correct and incorrect positioning of footnote symbols](#) below). The placement of the footnote symbol should go from left to right, followed by top to bottom. When a footnote refers to the whole table, for example referencing the source of the table content, the footnote symbol should go at the end of the table title.

Each footnote needs to be explained. Repeat the superscript letter immediately under the table and follow it with the explanatory text. There is no space between the superscript letter and the explanatory text. Start each footnote on a new line, using a soft return between footnotes (i.e. hold the shift key when pressing return). Footnotes may or may not be full sentences, but if they are full sentences they should end with a full stop.

Examples of table footnotes

Use a superscript letter for a footnote.[a]	The order of footnotes should go left to right, followed by top to bottom.[b]
A third footnote could be used here.[c]	—

[a]Use the same superscript letter in the footnote text below the table.
[b]Footnotes that are full sentences should finish with a full stop.
[c]Start each footnote on a new line. Use a soft return (i.e. hold the shift key when pressing return) between new lines.

Examples of correct and incorrect positioning of footnote symbols

Correct	Incorrect
The analysis does not include the full study.[a]	The analysis does not include the full study [a].
The doses were inconsistent (from 0.5 mg to 10 mg[b]) and reported only once a day.	The doses were inconsistent (from 0.5 mg to 10 mg)[b] and reported only once a day.
The doses[c] were inconsistent (from 0.5 mg to 10 mg).	The doses were inconsistent (from 0.5 mg to 10 mg)[c].

[a] Footnote referring to the full sentence
[b] Footnote referring to the information in parentheses
[c] Footnote referring specifically to the word 'doses'

How to format multiple footnotes

If you need to add multiple footnotes to one statement, use commas to separate the footnote letters but do not add spaces after the commas.

Here is an example.[a,b,c]

In cases where there are a large number of footnotes to be applied, it is acceptable to display a range with a hyphen. This will be a judgement based on the context in the table and should be applied consistently within the table.

Here is another example.[b-h]

If there are a large number of footnotes but the range is not continuous, then a mix of commas and hyphens is necessary.

Sometimes you may need to take this approach.[b,c,f-j]

Figures

In this section: [Image size](#) | [Automatic renumbering and positioning of figures in the review](#) | [Types of figures](#)

RevMan allows for the inclusion of additional figures in the main content of a Cochrane review: these may be items produced in

RevMan or be graphs or images from other sources (e.g. photographs). See the [Handbook](#) for information about figures and graphs in Cochrane reviews.

Use the guidance provided in the [RevMan Knowledge Base](#) to ensure the published figures are appropriate. Please ensure that any figures you insert in the review are legible and clear and have an appropriate and accurate title.

Image size

Images added in RevMan must have a minimum width of 500 pixels. You will see a validation warning if your image does not meet this requirement. There is no set maximum size in pixels. Wiley (Cochrane's publisher) suggest that a maximum width of 2000 pixels will result in a good-quality image when published.

Wiley advise that images should be less than 1650 mm wide. Images wider than this will be resized in the published PDF.

Please note that large images affect the size of submission files, which can cause problems, such as difficulty comparing versions and generating submission files. Large images may also cause problems with publishing the review.

There is no set limit to the number of figures. Around 10 figures should be sufficient for most intervention reviews, although more may be required for complex reviews, network meta-analyses (NMAs) and other review types. If there are multiple figures to import and the size of the review will be very big, please consider using an open online repository instead of adding them to the review (see [Author guidelines: External data and files](#)).

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The positioning of figures cannot be previewed in RevMan.

Figure types

RevMan gives the option to add the following types of figures.

- Flow diagram
- Forest plot
- Funnel plot
- Risk of bias graph
- Risk of bias summary
- Other figure

Figure type	Description	How to add/edit in RevMan (Default view)	Style guidance
Flow diagram	Mandatory visual representation of the flow of studies in the review	**PRISMA 2009 version** Create and edit in RevMan. Figures > Add Figure > PRISMA **PRISMA 2020 version** Download template from [PRISMA](#) and create diagram in Word. Upload to RevMan: Figures > Add Figure > Other figure. Edit in Word and upload amended diagram. **PRISMA-type diagram**	Text in Results of the search must match PRISMA diagram. Numbers within the PRISMA diagram must 'flow'. Use: - 'records' or 'articles' not 'studies' or 'trials' throughout but give total number of studies at the end (note: 1 record may not equal 1 study);

		Create outside RevMan and upload to RevMan: Figures > Add Figure > Other figure. Edit outside RevMan (in program in which diagram was created) and upload amended diagram.	• 'ineligible' not 'wrong' for reasons for exclusion; • 'people' or 'participants' not 'patients'; • lower-case letter after number (e.g. 25 studies included).
			Complete the caption. For example, 'Study flow diagram' (no full stop at the end).
Forest plot	Visual representation of syntheses for an outcome	Forest plots are created in RevMan in the Analyses for each comparison. Select individual forest plots to display in the text for the review's main outcomes or comparisons (i.e. those in the summary of findings tables). For all other comparisons, link from the text to the Analyses supplementary material, which includes forest plots for all syntheses. See Revman Knowledge Base Edit in Analyses in RevMan. Forest plots will update automatically.	When you create your analyses, consider how this information will be displayed in the forest plot. • Start each individual outcome with a capital letter, including sub categories • Write outcomes in sentence case, for example 'Intranasal spray', not 'Intranasal Spray' • Relabel axes; the default labelling, 'Favours [experimental], 'Favours [control]' is

not acceptable. Use the name of the intervention and control

- Use sentence case for axes labels and remove square brackets, for example, 'Favours intranasal spray' *not* 'Favours [Intranasal Spray]'
- Check spelling is consistent with the review text (UK/US English).

Show risk of bias judgements in the forest plot.

Consider switching off totals if there is only one study.

Funnel plot	Scatter plot for evaluation of publication bias or heterogeneity (subgroups)	Created in Revman Analyses section (study names optional) See [RevMan Knowledge Base](#) for how to add.	As above
Risk of bias graph	Graph of review authors' risk of bias judgements	**RoB 1 only** Created by RevMan from	Add a caption (no full stop at the end), e.g. Review authors'

		authors' risk of bias judgements in the risk of bias table (Characteristics of included studies) Figures > Add Figure > Figure type: Risk of bias graph	judgements about each risk of bias item presented as percentages across all included studies
Risk of bias summary	'Traffic light' display of review authors' risk of bias judgements for each study and each domain.	**RoB 1 only** Created by RevMan from authors' risk of bias judgements in the risk of bias tables (Characteristics of included studies). Figures > Add Figure > Figure type: Risk of bias summary	Add a caption (no full stop at the end), e.g. Review authors' judgements about each risk of bias item for each included study
Other figure	Any figure not shown above, e.g. process diagram, illustration, photo	Figures > Add Figure > Figure type: Other figure	Make sure any text (graph labels, dates, annotations etc.) follow Cochrane style. Add a caption (no full stop at the end).