



Shape Alignment in Word and Excel

When you draw a straight line using the *Shapes* gallery and want it horizontally or vertically aligned, no problem. Hold down the **Shift** key while drawing the line. As you draw by dragging, it properly aligns. But, as soon as you start changing the length or direction of the line, it no longer looks horizontal (or vertical). One side ends up misaligned!

The shorter the line, the more obvious it is when it's not properly aligned.

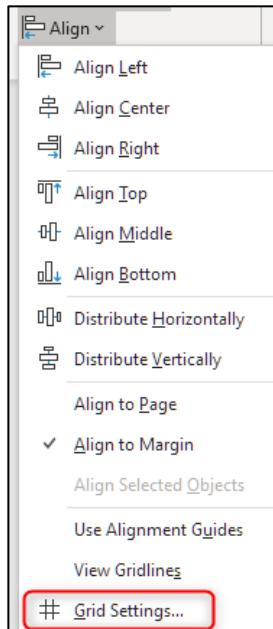
— becomes  when the line is selected.

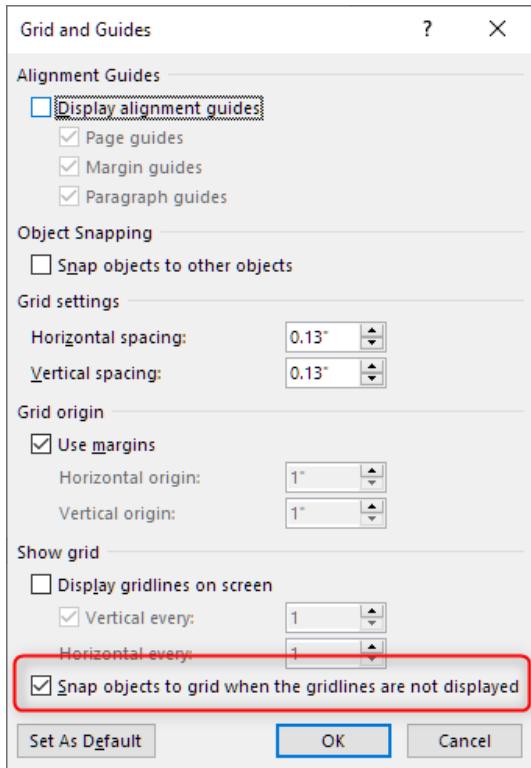
When you attempt to stretch or shrink the size of the line, this happens:



One of the ends jumps up or down. Which, of course, makes YOU want to jump up and down. Let's figure it out.

1. Select the line.
2. Navigate to the **Shape Format** tab.
3. Click on the **Align** drop-down and choose **Grid Settings**.





4. **Uncheck Snap objects to grid when the gridlines are not displayed.**
5. Click on **OK**.
6. You can now smoothly move one end of a line without it trying to align with an invisible grid.

For some more fun with lines, try holding down the **Ctrl** key while dragging one end. The entire line rotates, rather than just the selected end. You can shrink or grow the line proportionally while spinning it around.

In summary:

- When working with lines or arrows, press and hold the **Shift** key while drawing the shape. This will assure it is completely horizontal or vertical (depending on the direction you drag the pointer).
- If you have trouble resizing a shape, verify that it's not trying to align to the invisible grid.