

# EXCEL YOUR FINANCIAL MIND

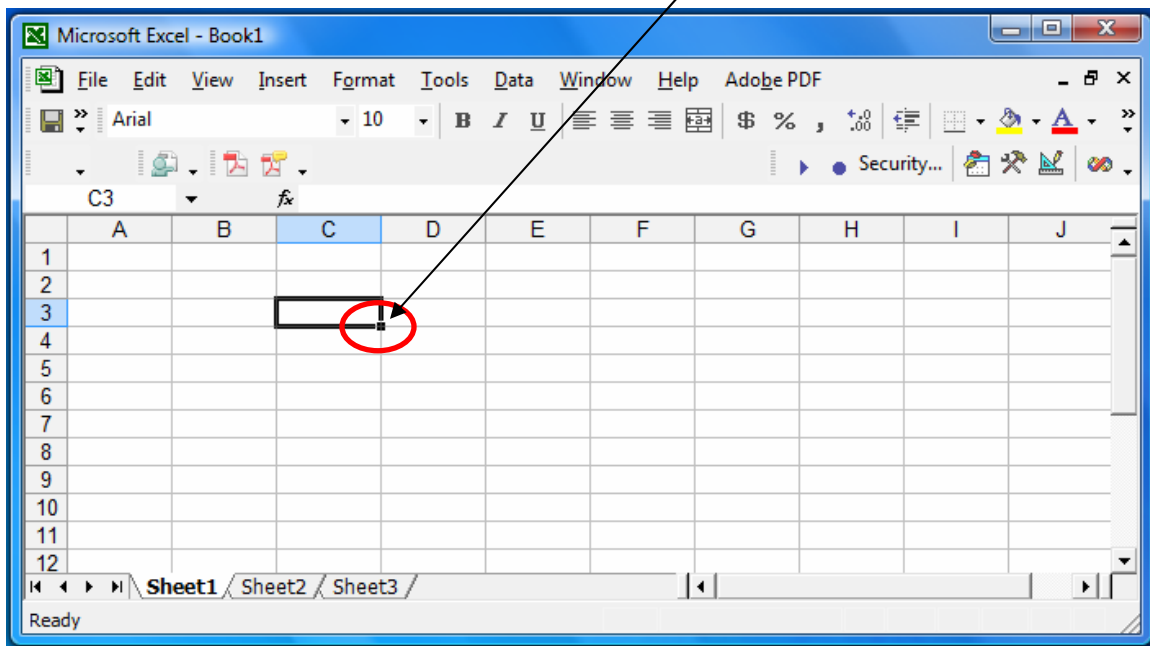
A bimonthly (how to) letter which covers some cool tools in Microsoft Excel  
By Bob Walker @ Outside Bank Services

Excel offers many options to perform the same tasks. Some options make data entry much faster than others. As for entering data and populating cells, nothing can be faster than simply dragging a mouse. Today I'm going to cover some very easy and time saving tasks for data entry.

**The Fill handle will be our focus today.**

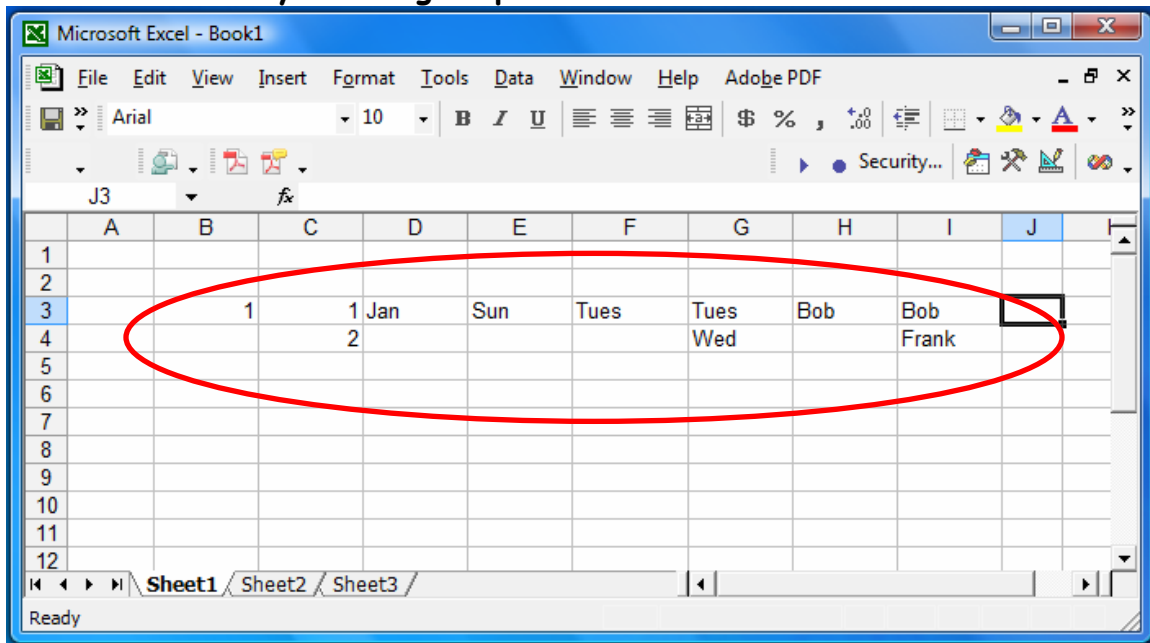
First, **browse the tool bar under the Edit menu and select the option "Fill"**. Many of those fill commands can also be performed simply by dragging your mouse. Have you ever truly experimented with the "Fill" handle or known it's capabilities?

*Fill handle is the little square box in the bottom right corner*



(If the Fill handle is not visible in your spreadsheet, you will need to turn it on. The location to turn it on and off is under the "Tools" option on the toolbar. Go to Tools/Options, click on the "Edit" tab, click the "Allow cell drag and drop", press "Ok".)

Start off by creating a spreadsheet similar to the one below.

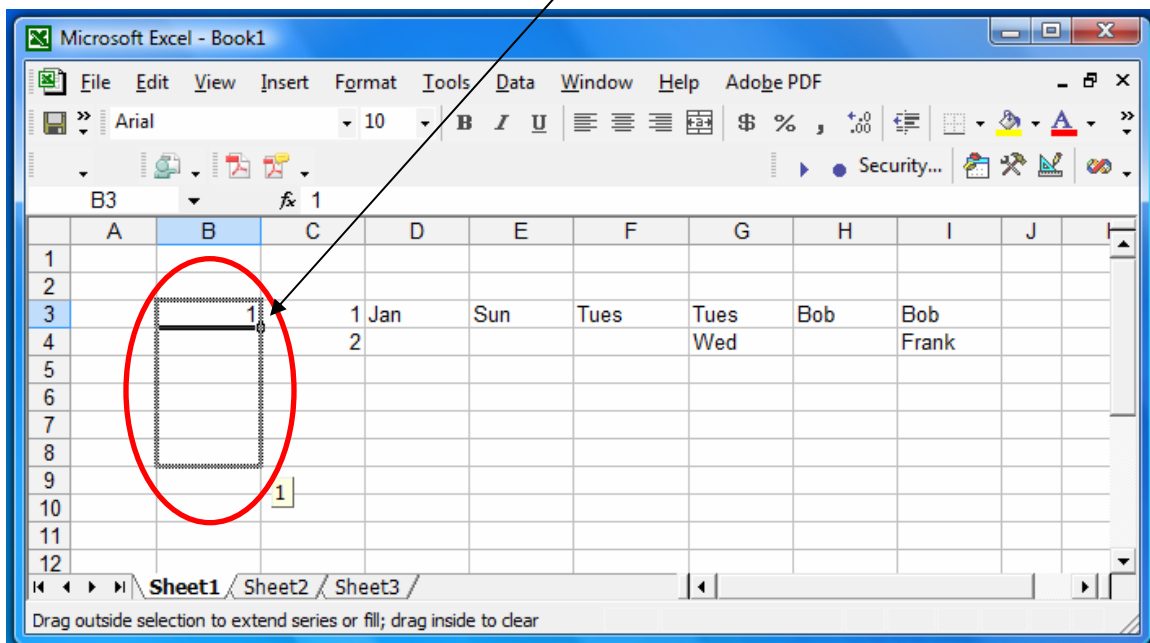


Notice in column "B", I just have the number One and in column "C" I put One and Two.

Notice in columns "D" and "E" I put the first month of the year and first day of the week respectively.

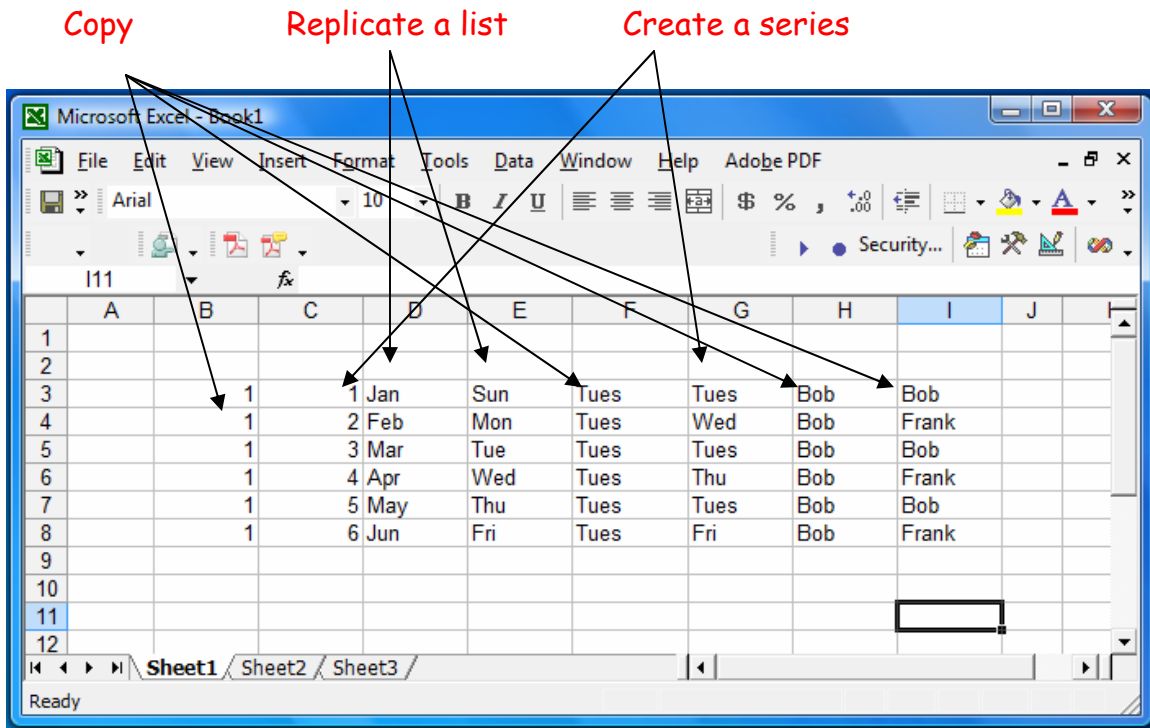
Notice in columns "F" I entered Tues and in columns "G" I entered Tues & Wed.

Now, click in cell "B3". You will see the fill handle in the bottom right corner of that cell. Click on the Fill handle and drag it to cell "B8".



Continue to drag down each column individually. But, be sure to first highlight all data in that column before dragging. (In column "C", first highlight the numbers 1 & 2, then grab the Fill handle and drag.) Each time you do a drag or Auto Fill, Excel tries to do one of three things.

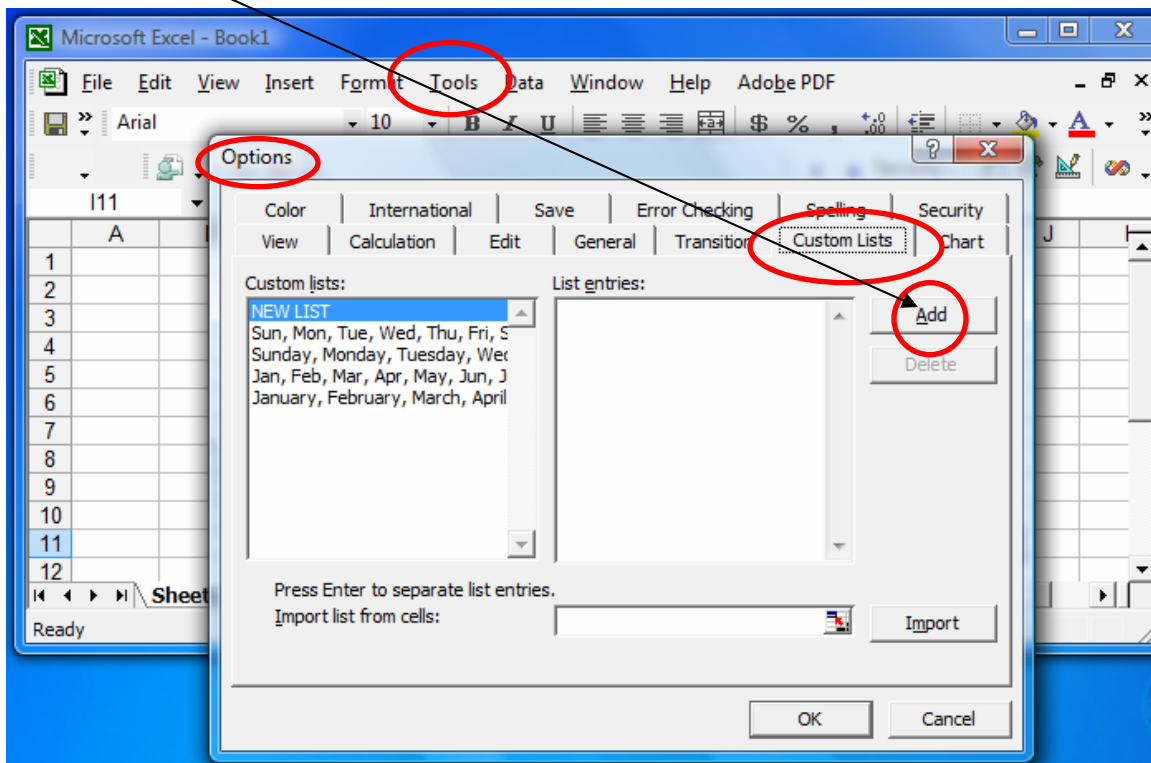
1. **Copy** - Copies info from above and pastes it below.
2. **Replicate a list** - Takes information from a list and pastes the list below.
3. **Create a series** - Excel knows the next in a series and pastes it below.



Excel is programmed to know the series of numbers 123... and it will continue it as far as you drag. But **the cool series I like is dates**. If you create a cell with 6/12/08 and drag the Fill handle it will populate the next cell with 6/13/08. But, try typing 6/30/06 and 7/31/08 in the next cell. Then drag the handle. Excel is smart enough to know you want the last day of each month in each cell you drag to. This is a real time saver when creating spreadsheets like amortization tables.

In order for Excel to **replicate a list**, it needs a list to replicate. Some lists come with Excel already created. But, Excel allows you to alter or create more lists. To get access to these lists, click on the "Tools" menu, then slide down and click on "Options". Click on the tab "Custom List".

If you would like to create a new list, click on the "Add" button and start typing.



Excel allows you to create your own list and with the Fill handle you can simply populate the cells in a column or row.

You're done.

**I hope this helps you out** and you can use it in some of your spreadsheets. **Watch for my next (how to) letter in two weeks.** If you have not received any of these in the past and would like to see some of my previous tips for cool tools, drop me a line at [bobw@outsidebankservices.com](mailto:bobw@outsidebankservices.com) . I will be glad to send you some of my archived tips. Or, if you have any questions or ideas for future tips, let me know and I will try to cover the topic of your request.

If you need some help in spreadsheets, databases, or to create a custom stand alone windows program, I can help, it's my job.

You can call (760) 522-5878, or fax (866) 651-7350 or email [bobw@outsidebankservices.com](mailto:bobw@outsidebankservices.com) .

Thank you and I'm looking forward to some dialog.  
Bob Walker