

Lesson 2-16: Use AutoFill options

Sometimes AutoFill begins to misbehave and actually gets in the way of efficient work by wrongly anticipating what you need.

- 1 Open *First Quarter Sales and Profit-10* from your sample files folder (if it isn't already open).
- 2 Populate cells F18 to F24 with sequential dates beginning with 1-Jan-16 using AutoFill.
 1. In cell F18 type the date: **01-Jan-16**
 2. AutoFill cell F18 down as far as cell F24.

The cells are populated with sequential dates:

| | A | B | C | D | E | F |
|----|-----------|---|----|-----------|----------|-----------|
| 18 | Monday | 1 | 9 | 01-Jan-16 | Adjusted | 01-Jan-16 |
| 19 | Tuesday | 2 | 18 | 02-Jan-16 | Adjusted | 02-Jan-16 |
| 20 | Wednesday | 3 | 27 | 03-Jan-16 | Adjusted | 03-Jan-16 |
| 21 | Thursday | 4 | 36 | 04-Jan-16 | Adjusted | 04-Jan-16 |
| 22 | Friday | 5 | 45 | 05-Jan-16 | Adjusted | 05-Jan-16 |
| 23 | Saturday | 6 | 54 | 06-Jan-16 | Adjusted | 06-Jan-16 |
| 24 | Sunday | 7 | 63 | 07-Jan-16 | Adjusted | 07-Jan-16 |

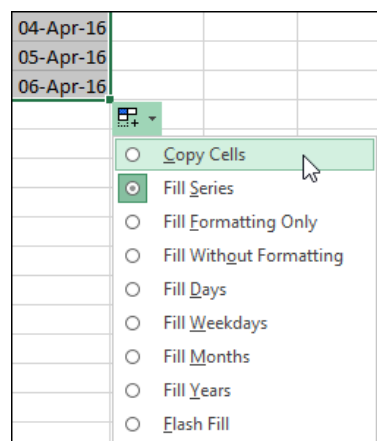
- 3 Populate cells G18 to G24 with the date **31-Mar-16** using the AutoFill Smart Tag.
 1. In cell G18 type the date: **31-Mar-16**.
 2. AutoFill down as far as cell G24.

At some time, you'll need to add transaction dates to a worksheet and will have four or five entries with the same date.

AutoFill is perfect for eliminating the need to re-type the date for each transaction, but its insistence upon incrementing the date every time could be very frustrating.

Fortunately, you can change the default behavior.

3. Click the Auto Fill Options Smart Tag  at the bottom right corner of the filled cells.



First Quarter Sales and Profit-10

4. Click *Copy Cells* to tell AutoFill not to increment the date.

4 Understand AutoFill options.

The *Fill Formatting* option is beyond the scope of this *Basic Skills* book but is covered in-depth in the *Essential Skills* book in this series (in *Session Four: Making Your Worksheets Look Professional*).

Flash Fill will be introduced later in: *Lesson 2-19: Use automatic Flash Fill to split delimited text*.

Here's what the other options will do:

| Copy Cells | Fill Series | Fill Days | Fill Weekdays | Fill Months | Fill Years |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| This is what you just did. The first cell is copied to the other cells. | The default for dates that include the day. The date increments by one day at a time. | The date increments by one day at a time. | Because 1 st April 2016 is a Friday the weekend days are omitted and the series jumps from 1 st April to 4 th April. | Normally this would show the same day number for each month. In this example, there are only 30 days in three of the months so 30 th is shown instead of 31 st . | The same calendar day is shown for each subsequent year. |
| 31-Mar-16 | 31-Mar-16 | 31-Mar-16 | 31-Mar-16 | 31-Mar-16 | 31-Mar-16 |
| 31-Mar-16 | 01-Apr-16 | 01-Apr-16 | 01-Apr-16 | 30-Apr-16 | 31-Mar-17 |
| 31-Mar-16 | 02-Apr-16 | 02-Apr-16 | 04-Apr-16 | 31-May-16 | 31-Mar-18 |
| 31-Mar-16 | 03-Apr-16 | 03-Apr-16 | 05-Apr-16 | 30-Jun-16 | 31-Mar-19 |
| 31-Mar-16 | 04-Apr-16 | 04-Apr-16 | 06-Apr-16 | 31-Jul-16 | 31-Mar-20 |
| 31-Mar-16 | 05-Apr-16 | 05-Apr-16 | 07-Apr-16 | 31-Aug-16 | 31-Mar-21 |
| 31-Mar-16 | 06-Apr-16 | 06-Apr-16 | 08-Apr-16 | 30-Sep-16 | 31-Mar-22 |

5 Populate cells F18 to F24 with sequential dates using a right-click AutoFill.

1. Click on cell F18 to make it the active cell.
2. AutoFill down to cell F24, but this time hold down the right mouse button.

When you release the mouse button you are instantly presented with the AutoFill options (see sidebar).

This method is preferred to the Smart Tag method because it is faster (one click instead of two).

3. Click: *Fill Series* or *Fill Days*.

In this example *Fill Series* and *Fill Days* produce exactly the same result.

6 Save your work as *First Quarter Sales and Profit-11*.

