

A different type of writing exercise, this time in preparation for buying a house

 devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20090210-00

February 10, 2009



Raymond Chen

One of my colleagues was overwhelmed by how many times papers need to be signed when you buy a house. A seemingly endless stack of papers. Sign and date here, initial here, initial here, now sign this, and this, and this, and sign and date here, and sign here, and initial here... By the time it's over, your arm is about to fall off.

Some years later, my colleague was about to buy a new house and began to dread the signature-fest that would invariably ensue at the closing. Another ten-foot-tall stack of papers that needed to be signed and initialed.

In preparation, my colleague actually did *hand exercises* to build up stamina and strength. I'm not sure what the exercises consisted of, but they were probably a mix of strength-building wrist exercises and some stints of extended longhand writing.

Finally closing day came. My colleague walked into the agent's office, sat down, and prepared for the worst, only to be surprised when the stack of papers was only a dozen pages long. What happened to the ten-foot-tall stack of papers that took hours to sign and initial?

The difference is that my colleague paid cash for the new house rather than taking out a loan. That ten-foot-tall stack of papers? Nearly all of them were related to the mortgage, not to the actual sale of the house. The paperwork associated with a house sale proper is comparatively light.

But all was not lost. At least my colleague had pretty strong wrists now.

[Raymond Chen](#)

Follow

