

Updating Project Progress

I have worked with Project Managers from various backgrounds that have used all kinds of technologies to create project schedules no matter what their background or technology expertise is they always have the same questions:

“What level of detail do I need to go into?”

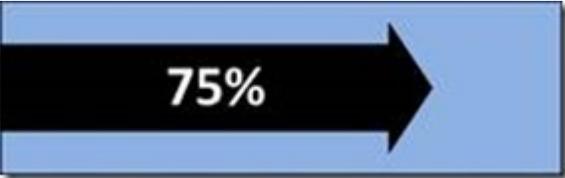
“How do I update project progress once my project has started, and how often do I need to do this?”

“How do I go about getting these updates from my project Team?”

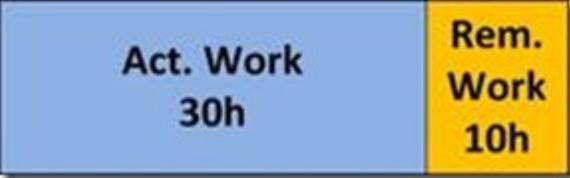
“What level of detail do I need to go into?” I answered this question in the article – [How Complicated Does a Project Schedule Need to Be?](#)

There is no set formula for how to update project progress. The method that you choose depends upon the nature of the work being performed and your organization’s reporting requirements.

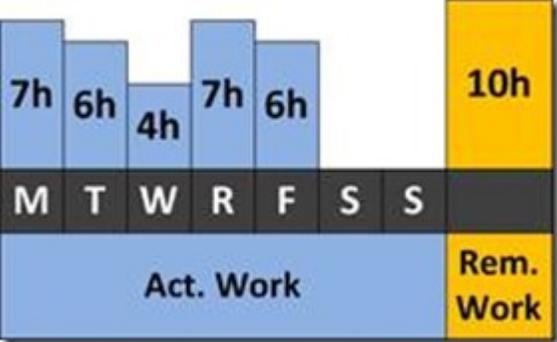
In order to track progress and forecast the remaining timeline, work effort, and costs for the project, Microsoft Project offers three progress tracking methods:



Percent Complete: A simple estimated ratio of actual work performed vs. total amount of work to be completed.



Actual Work and Remaining Work: A measure of the total actual work hours performed to date and the estimated number of work hours remaining.



Actual Work per Period: A measure of the actual work hours performed during each time period (daily, weekly, monthly) and the estimated number of work hours remaining.

Project Name	Task Name	Rem	Actual Work						
			6/1	6/2	6/3	6/4	6/5	6/6	6/7
Zirk Plaza Construction	Build Walls	67 h	0 h	0 h	7 h	6 h	0 h	0 h	0 h
Administrative	Sick Time		0 h	0 h	0 h	0 h	8 h	0 h	0 h
Administrative	Vacation		8 h	8 h	0 h	0 h	0 h	0 h	0 h

Project Server timesheets: The project team fill out timesheets in PWA, Once the Project Manager accepts the updates the project progress is automatically updated.

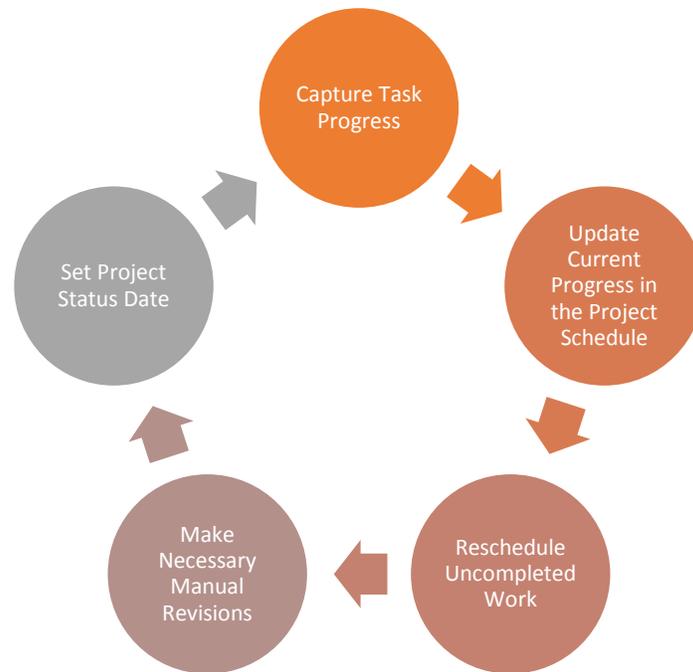
Regardless of the selected progress tracking method, however, you will still need to manually mark project milestones as completed within Microsoft Project by using the 'Percent Complete' method and entering '100%'.

Throughout the controlling phase of a project, the Project Manager gathers progress information from the project team to reflect the overall progress of the project as well as to forecast the estimated time, work effort, and cost required to finish the project.

The exercise of measuring progress and entering it into the project schedule should happen on a periodic basis; the frequency of this exercise depends upon the amount of detail required to manage the project (more detail may require more frequent updates) and your reporting needs:

- Once every week
- Once every two weeks
- Twice every month
- Once every month

Project progress measurement and schedule updating should happen according to the following cyclical process throughout the entire controlling stage of the project:



- **Capture Task Progress:** The Project Manager collects information about the progress that team members have made during the current update cycle, perhaps verbally through a status meeting, a written log, or online system such as Microsoft Project Server.

- **Update the Current Progress in the Project Schedule:** The Project Manager transfers the progress information into the project schedule to reflect the current progress of project activities, either manually or through an integrated system such as Microsoft Project Server.

- **Reschedule Uncompleted Work:** The Project Manager manually reschedules any activities in the project schedule that were planned during the update cycle, but for various reasons were not performed.

- **Make Necessary Manual Revisions:** The Project Manager manually adds tasks, removes and inactivates tasks, changes resource assignments, and makes other manual project schedule revisions in reaction to activities performed or issues encountered during the update cycle.

- **Set the Project Status Date:** The Project Manager sets the date in the schedule reflecting the last day of the update cycle and the timeliness of the project schedule data.