# Project Manager’s Weekly Routine Checklist

In the management phase, it’s important for the project manager to get early warnings regarding problems with the project—remember “bad news early is good news.” To keep the project on track, you must carry out regular checks. You must build them into your routine. The sooner you detect problems, the sooner you can do something about them. And the less impact the problems are likely to have on your project.

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| *Remember: Finding a problem isn't a problem. You can do something about the problems you find. It’s having a problem go unnoticed that is the problem. You can’t do much about those.* |

How often you should check the project? That’s hard to say. It depends on many things: the nature of your project, your style as a project manager, the skill and experience of people you are working with, and the needs of your stakeholders.

A common default for checks is weekly. But if weekly doesn’t work for you—e.g., you think you should make the checks more or less frequent—change it.

Regardless of the timing, here’s a starter checklist for you. Take this and make it your own by adding or deleting items from the routine that make the most sense for you and your situation.

## The Manage Phase “Weekly Routine” Checklist

* **Update your plan** – Capture the 'actuals' from timesheets and spending information into your project plan. If you haven't kept the plans up-to-date during the last period, do it now.
* **Check progress** – Check what outputs have been delivered by the team(s) compared to the plan.
* **Check estimated-times-to-completion** (ETCs): Check the 'estimated time to complete' for current activities (or work packages) against the plan. If anything is way off the plan, investigate.
* **Check team performance** – Are your teams performing at the level that you expected? Or is performance significantly above or below what you had anticipated? Note this. Investigate further if needed.
* **Check staff availability** – Check to see whether the work hours reported by teams and team members are in line with the work hours they are scheduled for. If staff are not sufficiently available to the project (e.g., perhaps they are being called out to do other work) then take action right away before you start missing important deadlines.
* **Check spending** – What’s been spent during the last period? How does this compare to the budget? Document this and investigate further as needed.
* **Check quality** – Review the quality log. Confirm that any planned tests or checks that are supposed to have been completed by this time have been completed. Check signoffs to ensure tests were completed by the right people.
* **Check rework** – Look at the level of rework after quality checks to correct faulty outputs. See if the amount of rework is reasonable or if it reveals a quality problem with significant errors in things going for test.
* **Look for outstanding to-dos** – Review your project log for outstanding action items anything you may have forgotten. Confirm that anything unresolved is genuinely 'on hold' while you are waiting for something else.
* **Assess morale** – How’s the morale of your team? Check in with team members. Do what you can to help boost as needed.
* **Check for conflicts in relationships** – How are your teams working together? Are you seeing signs of friction or frustration? How are the relationships between your own organization’s staff and any supplier staff working on the project?
* **Check progress against projections** – Using the information you've gathered so far, do a forward projection. Confirm that you’re likely to finish current work activities within any agreed upon limits or timeframes. If not, consider
  + What can you alter, how can you adapt so that you will hit the target?
  + If you can't get back on track, then to whom should you report the matter and how will you report it?
* **Look ahead** – Check what lies ahead in the period up your next routine check. Make sure that you're aware of important actions such as major spends, checks on suppliers and action on risks. If you're using a project log for reminders, cross check with that log to be sure that you've noted everything in there.

Adapted from Nick Graham, *Project Management Checklists*