

Alternatively, as a reference point you can enter a *finish date*. The finish date is the latest date on which you want your project to end. If you enter a finish date as your reference point, Microsoft Project will schedule tasks backwards from this date.

As a rule, you enter a start or finish date, but not both. Entering a start date lets Microsoft Project schedule tasks with the greatest amount of flexibility. If you do not enter a start or finish date, Microsoft Project will automatically use the current date as the start date.

### Method

To create a new project file

1. On the Standard toolbar, click the New button.  
or
1. From the File menu, choose New.
2. In the Project Information dialog box, choose OK to accept the current date as the Start date.  
or
2. In the Project Information dialog box, in the Start date combo box, enter a date and choose OK.  
or
2. In the Project Information dialog box, from the Schedule from drop-down list, select Project Finish Date and then, in the Finish Date combo box, enter a date and choose OK.

### Exercise

In the following exercise, you will create a new project file.

1. On the Standard toolbar, click the New button
2. In the Start date combo box, type **7/1/98**
3. Choose OK

*The new project file opens and the Project Information dialog box appears.*

*The date is accepted as the project start date and the Project Information dialog box closes.*