

Creating links

Guides for Merlin Project Express

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Creating links - as of December 2018

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This guide shows you how to create dependencies in Merlin Project Express.

Why link

The aim of linking content in a project is to define the sequence in which the activities are worked through logically.

# ▲	Traits	Title	Successors	Predecessors	Week 1			
					14	15	16	17
0	☰ ☺	▼ My Project			My Project			
1		Activity A	2		Activity A			
2		Activity B		1	Activity B			

Example: Only when **Activity A** is completed can **Activity B** begin. Activity A is the predecessor of Activity B, which is its successor.

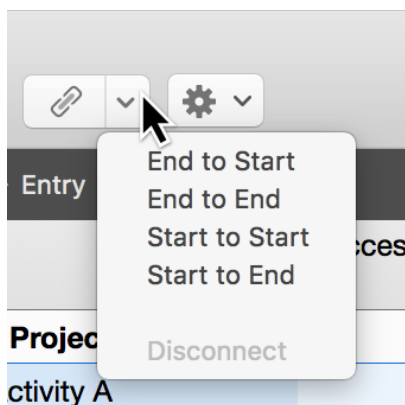
Creating links

You can link project activities. When linking, dependencies are created that define a logical sequence.

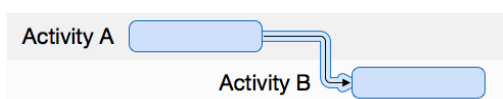
Select at least two activities that you want to link together.



On the toolbar you will find the **Link** button. If you click the **arrow** to the right of the **Link** icon, the available link types and the option to **separate** existing links appear.



Click the **Link** icon or use the keyboard shortcut **ctrl + cmd + L** for the **End to Start** dependency type. The two activities are now linked with an **arrow**.

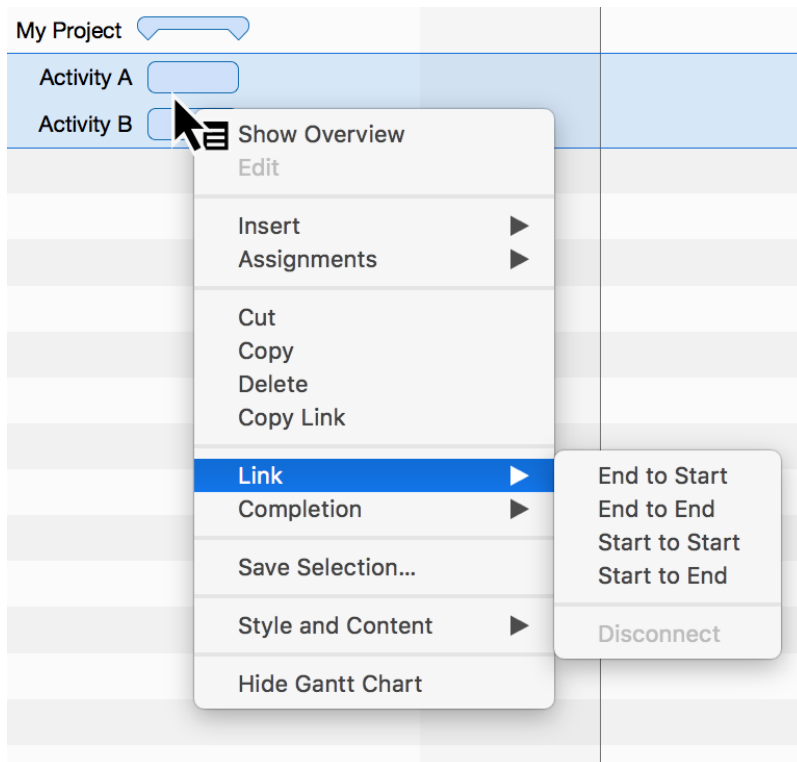


Alternatives

All roads lead to Rome, including the various possibilities for creating links.

Menu and context menu

In the **Structure** → **Link** menu item you will find the same options.



Secondary-clicking selected content will display the **context menu**. This contains the **dependency** option with the four **dependency types**.

Linking using the mouse

You can also link activities in the Gantt chart using your mouse. Press and hold the **alt** button while hovering the mouse pointer over an activity bar or milestone.



A small **black dot** appears on the activity. While holding down the **alt** key, move the mouse to another activity (successor).

The dependency will be created as soon as you release the mouse button.

Linking with columns

In the **Predecessor** or **Successor** columns, you can see the predecessor or successor **activity numbers** (#).

#	Traits	Title	Predecessors	Successors
0	☰ ☹	▼ New Project		
1		New Activity		
2		New Activity		
3		New Activity		

Enter an activity number in the **Predecessor** or **Successor** columns, to create a dependency of the current activity row to that number.



The **Successor** column is not activated by default.

Disconnecting links

To disconnect links, click a link line and press the **delete** key.

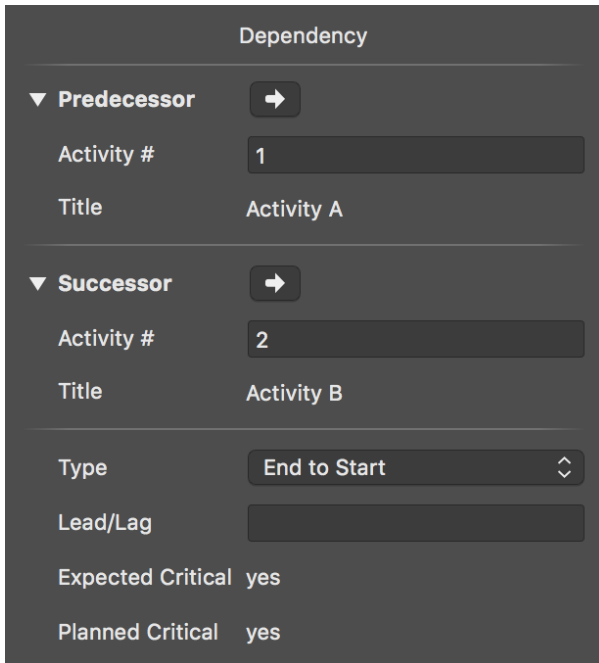


If you need to delete several links, select all activities and use the **Disconnect** option in one of the **Link** menus.

Dependency Inspector

If you select a link, the **Dependency** inspector appears.

The options contained in the Dependency inspector are responsible for the **dependency** of linked activities, groups, and milestones.



The screenshot shows a dark-themed 'Dependency' inspector window. It is divided into sections for 'Predecessor' and 'Successor'. The 'Predecessor' section includes a dropdown arrow, a text input for 'Activity #' containing '1', and a text input for 'Title' containing 'Activity A'. The 'Successor' section includes a dropdown arrow, a text input for 'Activity #' containing '2', and a text input for 'Title' containing 'Activity B'. Below these sections are three more controls: a 'Type' dropdown menu set to 'End to Start', a 'Lead/Lag' text input field, and two checkboxes: 'Expected Critical' and 'Planned Critical', both of which are checked and labeled 'yes'.

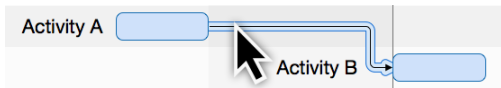
Here you can modify the predecessors and successors, and find them quickly in the project by clicking the **arrow**.

In the **Type** drop-down menu, you can select the **dependency types**. This lets you change the current dependency:

- **End to Start**
- **End to End**
- **Start to Start**
- **Start to End**

Lead/Lag in links

Click a **link line** to access the **Dependency** inspector.



Enter a time unit in the **Lead/Lag** field to lengthen the dependency between the linked activities.

If you enter a **negative** value, the dependency and the linked activity will move back along the timeline according to the entered lag value. For example, enter **-2 days** in the **Lead/Lag** field.



Lead/Lag can be entered manually in the **Predecessor** or **Successor** columns.

#	Traits	Title	Predecessors	Successors
0	📅🕒	▼ My Project		
1		Activity A		5ES+2 days
2		Activity B		
3	🕒	Activity C		
4	🕒	Activity D		
5	🕒	Activity E	1ES+2 days	

Example: If you enter the value **5ES+2 days** in the **Successor** column for an activity, an **End to Start** dependency will be created with the **Activity #5** and a lead/lag of **2 days**.

At the same time, the **Activity #5** will be also linked to **Activity #1** by a lead/lag of **2 days**. Its **Predecessor** column will show then: **1ES+2 days**