

Hiring Summer Employees? QuickBooks Can Track Their Time

QuickBooks offers capable tools for tracking the items you sell, but it's also quite a competent time-tracker. If you pay employees based on the hours they work, QuickBooks can ease your bookkeeping burden. Tracked time can flow to both invoices and payroll, helping you pay employees and collect on services provided to customers.

Before you start tracking time, you'll need to be sure you've turned on the related tools. Click **Edit | Preferences**, and then **Time & Expenses**. Click on the tab titled **Company Preferences**. You'll see the window shown in **Figure 1**.

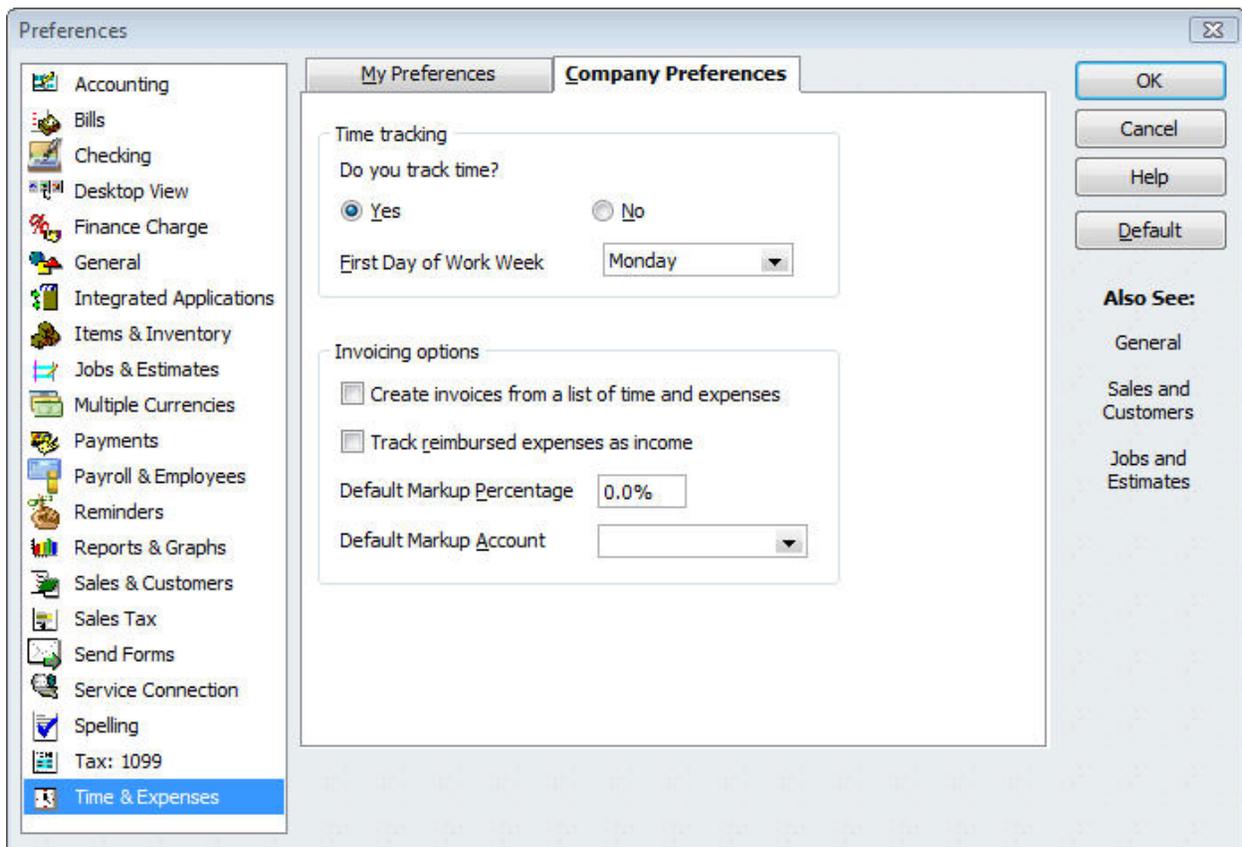


Figure 1: Before you can start tracking and billing for time, you'll need to fill out some of the fields in this **Preferences** window.

In this window, be sure you've checked **Yes**, and then select the first day of the work week from the drop-down list.

If you are going to want billable time to flow directly to invoices, check the first box under **Invoicing Options**. The other options in this window related to expense- and item-tracking; check with your accountant to see if your business needs to use them.

Tip: If you want to use payroll to pay employees for time worked, be sure to check the box labeled "Use time data to create paychecks" when you're building employee records as shown in **Figure 2**.

Item Name	Hourly/Annual Rate
Salary	41,500.00

Payroll Schedule: Biweekly
Pay Frequency: Biweekly
Class: [Empty]
 Use time data to create paychecks

Figure 2: To facilitate the flow from time to paychecks, be sure this box is checked.

If you're planning to use QuickBooks' job-tracking, click on **Sales & Customers** in the left pane, then on the **My Preferences** tab. Here, you can choose how you want QuickBooks to handle available time and costs when you're preparing an invoice.

Single Activities or Time Sheets?

QuickBooks offers two ways to enter time. You can record hours on individual tickets or fill out weekly timesheets. No matter which you choose, the information is always available in the other form. You can switch methods at any time, and your work will be preserved.

Let's start with the individual time tickets. Open the **Employee Center** in the toolbar, or click on the **Employees** menu. Click **Enter Time**, then **Time/Enter Single Activity**. This window shown in **Figure 3** opens:

Figure 3: It's easy to record hours on this single-activity ticket by simply filling in the blanks.

QuickBooks pulls in data from other parts of the program, records you've already created. First, enter the activity's date or select it from the calendar. Click the arrow next to **Name** and choose the appropriate employee from the list.

If the hours are going to be billed to a customer or job, click the next arrow and select the correct one (ignore this if you're just recording company time, like regular compensation or sick time). Finally, pick the service that the employee performed, if applicable. Be sure to check the **Billable** box when it's appropriate.

Tip: You can create a new record on the fly here if, for example, you haven't set up the service you need to record. Click **<Add New>** in the drop-down list.

Linking to Payroll

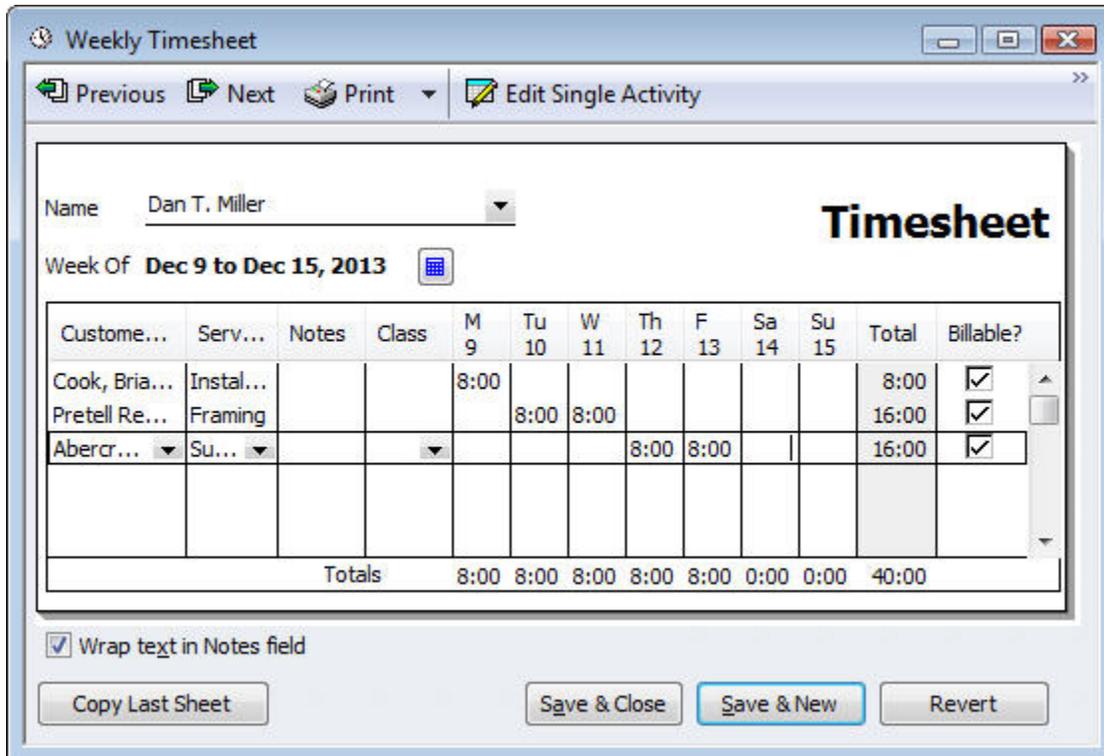
You can also use QuickBooks' timer if you're going to bill for a timed activity such as a phone call. And you can add notes that will be saved to the ticket.

QuickBooks provides other ways to describe hours spent so that they're recorded properly. If you have payroll turned on and have associated a payroll item with the selected service item, the **Payroll Item** field (which indicates how much the employee should be paid) will automatically be filled in. You can easily change this field if necessary.

If you haven't created a payroll item, select **<Add New>**. A wizard will walk you through the process. This relationship can be a bit confusing so talk to your accountant if you have any questions. When you're done, click **Save & Done** or **Save & New**.

Week at a Time

Weekly timesheets can save you a lot of time. To get there, open the **Employee Center** in the toolbar, or click on the **Employees** menu. Click **Use Weekly Timesheet**. You'll see a window similar to the one shown in **Figure 4**:



The screenshot shows a window titled "Weekly Timesheet" for the employee "Dan T. Miller" covering the week of "Dec 9 to Dec 15, 2013". The window contains a table with columns for days of the week (M 9, Tu 10, W 11, Th 12, F 13, Sa 14, Su 15) and a "Total" column. The table has three rows of activity data:

Custom...	Serv...	Notes	Class	M 9	Tu 10	W 11	Th 12	F 13	Sa 14	Su 15	Total	Billable?
Cook, Bria...	Instal...			8:00							8:00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pretell Re...	Framing				8:00	8:00					16:00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Abercr...	Su...						8:00	8:00			16:00	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Totals				8:00	8:00	8:00	8:00	8:00	0:00	0:00	40:00	

Below the table, there is a checkbox for "Wrap text in Notes field" which is checked. At the bottom of the window are three buttons: "Copy Last Sheet", "Save & Close", and "Save & New".

Figure 4: Rather than entering each activity individually, you can document an entire week at a time using the **Weekly Timesheet**.

You can speed through weekly timesheets, using the drop-down lists to select the appropriate data and entering the number of hours worked. Click **Copy Last Sheet** if you want to duplicate the configuration from the last pay period.

QuickBooks Time Tracker offers another way to save time and avoid errors. Employees can send their timesheets from any computer that has an Internet connection. Your payroll person can then download and incorporate them into the company's payroll. Prices start at \$10/month for one user.

So whether you're bringing employees in for seasonal help or your regular payroll incorporates time toiled as well as items sold, QuickBooks contains the tools you'll need to both invoice customers accurately and dispatch proper paychecks.