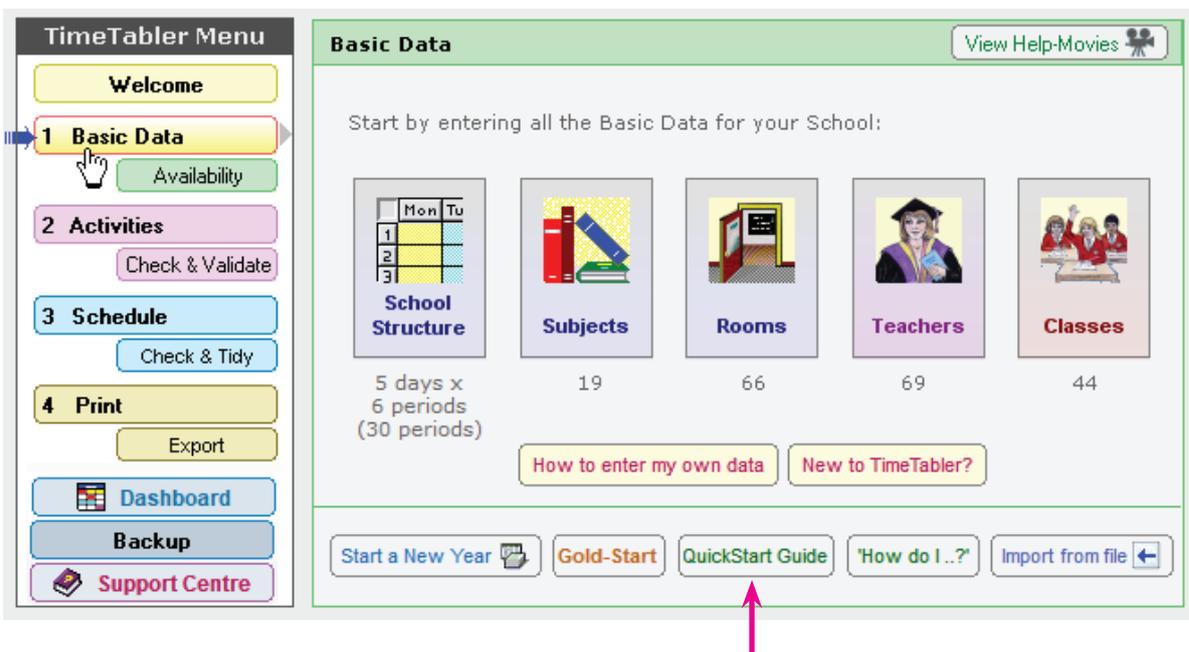


# TimeTabler

## QuickStart Guide



Use this QuickStart Guide to keep you on track as you go through the timetabling season.

It suggests the best step-by-step sequence for you to follow, and it gives you references to specific parts of the current full printed Manual if you need further details at any stage.

Like in the Manual, screenshots in this Guide are taken from the 'Classic' Theme, but exactly the same functionality is available in the other 'Left-hand' Theme.

The date of this version is 18/3/2024.

To see if there is a later version, check as shown above,

or check in the downloads area of the



**Glossary** Some of the terms used on these pages:

**Subject** A label given to an activity, eg. Maths, English, or Geography.

**Class** A Registration Group (or Tutor Group, Form Group). eg. class 7A

**Teaching Group** A group of students brought together for the teaching of a particular subject.  
eg. 7A-French.

**Set** A Teaching Group of students that have been selected by their attainment or ability.  
(In some admin systems (MIS) any Teaching Group may be ambiguously called a 'Set'.)

**Class Scheduling Name** A label that helps you to describe the curricular structure in your school. eg. 7AB represents 2 classes (7A, 7B) joined together.

**Activity** A lesson or lessons that are to be scheduled.  
eg. Class 7A for 3 Single periods of History with Mr Johnson.

**Batch** A collection of Activities. eg. A Batch containing all the activities for Year 7.

**Cycle** Schools usually have a 5-day cycle or a 10-day cycle, but others are possible.

**Scheduling** The actual constructing of the timetable, when activities are assigned to specific times of the cycle.

**Fixed points** Parts of the timetable that are at pre-determined times and Locked in place.  
eg. "Year 7 always have Games on Monday afternoon".

**FIT 'musical-chairs'** An essential scheduling tactic. An interchange of activities on the timetable to allow another activity to be fitted in.  
Moves can be 2-step, 3-step, 4-step ...up to 16-steps in **TimeTabler**.

For more, see the Glossary at: [www.timetabler.com/Glossary.pdf](http://www.timetabler.com/Glossary.pdf)

If you are a New User, please look at the details about **Gold-Start Enhanced Support** as explained at: [www.timetabler.com/gold-start](http://www.timetabler.com/gold-start) and if you have been given access to the Onboarding Portal, use that as well.

The next 8 pages outline for you the steps that are needed to enter your own data and then timetable them.  
Each step is cross-referenced to sections in the current printed **TimeTabler Manual**.

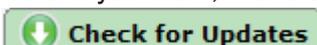
In addition you can use the  button on each screen,  
and view the **HelpMovies** via: 



For even more Help, visit the Help & Support Centre via:  
See the back page for more details.



Before you start, make sure you have the very latest program by clicking on:



Use this feature regularly, so that you always have the very latest version.

It is always best to read the full printed Manual first (!), but if you are short of time, or want a refresher, or just want to ensure that you have thought of everything, follow this step-by-step QuickStart Guide.

We suggest you  tick off each item as you complete it, or  if it doesn't apply in your case.

To check for a later version of this QuickStart Guide, or to download a fresh copy to scribble on, visit the  [Support Centre](#). See also the **HelpMovies** via: 



1  Check the interactive HelpScreen pictures display correctly when you click on a **Help** button. If not, see the KnowledgeBase.  **p. 5**

2  **Getting Started** : If you are using *TimeTabler* for the very **first** time, then (after using the Tutorial) select **Blank Data** as explained in Section **C1** in the Manual. **C1**

**NOTE:** If you have the data from last year, do **not** do Steps 3–21, but instead see HelpMovie **8** on “**Tidying-up last year’s data**”, and then move to Step 22.



Note : At any stage, if you'd like to re-visit the Tutorial, you can do this providing you Backup your own data as follows:

1. Use FileMenu  TT-Backup to Backup your data. See page ix in the printed Manual.
2. Use FileMenu  DemoData to install the Tutorial data.

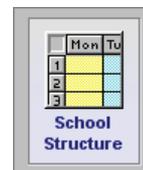
When you have finished using the Tutorial:

3. Use FileMenu  TT-Restore to load back your own data.

Alternatively, **better**, get the free Tutorial version (from our web-site), which installs in a separate folder automatically ...so it doesn't affect your data at all.

## Specifying your School Structure

### 1 Basic Data



3  Go to the **School Structure Screen** (see Section C5) and then check / edit the number of **days** in your timetable cycle. Rename the days if you wish. **C5**  
For different types of 2-week timetables, see section H50. **H50**

4  Check / Edit the number of **periods** in your school day, and the positions of breaks and lunch, as described in Section C5. **C5**

If you have staggered lunch-breaks, see section H15. **H15**

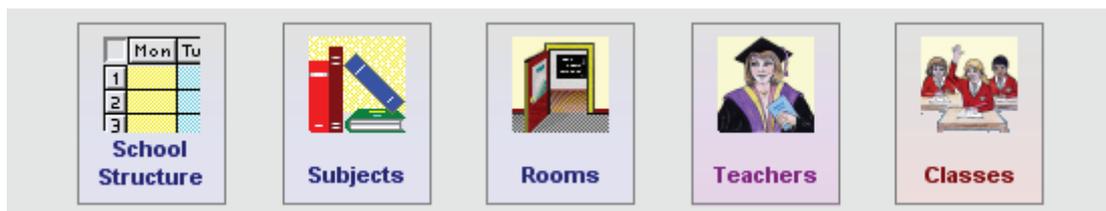
If you decide to add extra non-teaching periods (eg. for Registration, staggered lunch-breaks, etc) you will be able to change the period-labels that your colleagues will see (on the final printouts) via: PrintMenu->Publishing your Timetable. **H36**

5  If your entire school timetable has a definite fixed non-rectangular **Shape** (eg. the school is closed on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons) then you can use the Shape Screen, see C5. **C5**  
(optional)

In all other cases (eg. if *some* classes go home early on *some* days) use the Class Availability Screen at Step 15 of this QuickStart Guide. **H14**

6  Check / Edit the **Years** that you are going to be scheduling. If your school is on two or more **Sites**, specify which Year-groups are on which site. **C5**  
(optional)

When all is correct, click Close, then 'Yes' to save the changes.



- 7  Use  to get the complement to this Guide.
- [Note : For steps 8, 9, 10 you can import a file of this Basic Data if you can export the correct data from your MIS. See the article in the KnowledgeBase in the Support Centre.]
- 8  Enter the names of your **Subjects**, as described in Sections C4, C6. C6  
Choose distinct Subject Colours to help you on later screens.  
At the printout stage you can choose to print just the first 2 or first 3 letters, etc.
- 9  Enter the names of your **Rooms**, as you want them to appear on final printouts. C7  
C8  
If your school is on a single site, ignore the 'Site' column.  
Ignore the 'Teachers' column for now. See Sections C7, C8 for more details.
- 10  Enter the initials and full names of your **Teachers**. C9  
You do not have to enter a '**Main Subject**' but it is usually best -- it will save you time later, even if the teacher teaches 2, 3 or more subjects.  
You do not have to enter a '**Faculty number**' but it is very helpful because it allows you to group your teachers later, eg. on the Combing Chart Screen.  
You do not have to enter a '**1st Choice Room**', or a 2nd or 3rd, but it usually saves time later if you can enter some of these where possible. More details in C9. (On the Rooms Screen, C7, you can now see which staff share a room preference.)  
To specify Rooms for their 'second' subjects see Section C8. C8  
Note : it is not usually advisable to Add or Delete a teacher once you have started a schedule, though you can Append a teacher -- see Section C11 for more details. C11  
Click on **Sort** if you wish to change the order displayed.
- 11   If you have some **Part-time Teachers** whose  C15, H3-4  
unavailable times are **fixed** and known in advance, then click on the Availability button to go to the **Staff Availability Screen** (see C15 and H51). H51  
Block out their unavailable periods. See Step 17 for 'floating' part-timers.
- 12  While on the Staff Availability Screen, if you enter the correct value in the '**Max**' C15, H3  
(optional) Teaching Load column, it will help you to check your data at Step 28.
- 13  Decide whether you intend to use **Pools** of teachers (or of Special Resources, C20  
H39  
(optional) see the examples in C20, H39 - H41).  
This can be a very good way of increasing your solution-space, particularly in Lower School, and especially if the Subject (eg. Art) is only taught once per week (eg. 7A D =Ar). It is less good if the Subject (eg. French) is taught several times during the week (eg. 9A SSSSS =Fr) because it will be hard to get consistent teaching with the same teacher for each lesson.  
If you decide to use Pools, enter the Pool name first and then the members of the Pool.

Note : if you are timetabling a **Primary** school, read the article in the KnowledgeBase first. Download the PDF via:

Primary & Prep Schools

SEARCH

14  Enter the Scheduling Name and Printing Name for each of your **Classes**. **C10**

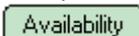


Please read all of Sections C10 and D5-6 first, very carefully, and if you have any doubts consult the free Support Centre. See also the relevant HelpMovies.

It is absolutely vital to get the correct Scheduling Names, so that they draw the correct Curriculum Diagram in Section D5. The wizards in D6 will help you. **D5**  
**D6**

A Printing Name is optional, see C10, and can be changed at any time.

Click on **Sort** to get the Classes in the order that you want.

15  (optional) If some of your Classes go home early on some days, or are unavailable for lessons in some periods for some reason (eg. staggered lunch-breaks), click on the Availability button to go to the **Class Availability Screen**.  **C16, H14**

16  (optional) Decide whether you will need to enter any **Special Resources**, by reading sections H9, H45. **C18**  
For example, if you have a unique resource (eg. a Drama Studio or a Swimming Pool) that must not be scheduled to more than one class at a time.  
You can add Special Resources later if you wish.

17  (optional)  **Part-timers** For more details, see the KnowledgeBase :  **C15**  
If you have any **'floating' part-timers**, decide whether you will use **A/P/F** on the Staff Availability Screen (C15, H3) or use **Special Locations**, (C19, H4-H7). **C19**  
For example, if you have some 'floating' Part-timers whose unavailable times do not have to be fixed in advance. If you need to schedule a Meeting (of the Senior Management Team, or a department), use a Special Location. **H3-7**  
You can also add Special Locations later if you wish. See also Step 11. **H51**

18  Review your Basic Data, check that it is accurate.  
You will not be able to use in later steps any Subject, Room, Teacher or Class that is not entered in your Basic Data.  
If you wish to edit or change anything in your Basic Data, make sure you read Section C11 first. **C11**

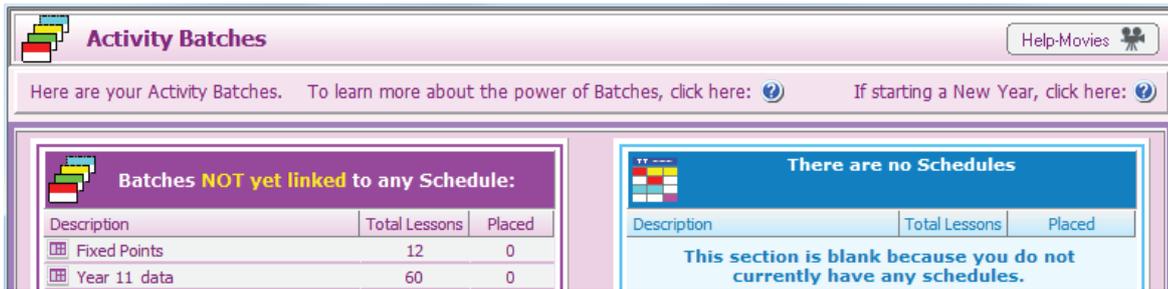
19  Make a **Backup** (or two) of your data (eg. on USB flashdrives, or using a Cloud store like Dropbox or GoogleDrive), see page ix. **p. ix**  
Save a Backup in the **Auto-Backup Library** (see p. x). **Do this at all key points.** **p. x - xi**

Note : If you are working in a Scottish school, see the article and PDFs on this subject in the KnowledgeBase at:



Support Centre

# Entering your Activities in Batches



**NOTE :** If you have the data from last year, do **not** do Steps 3–21 , but instead see HelpMovie 8 on “**Tidying-up last year’s data**”, and then move to Step 22.

20

Decide on **how many Batches** of activities you are going to enter, see D2, D5.

D1, D5  
D2

Most 11-16 schools (5 year-groups) use 6 batches : one ‘Fixed-Points’ Batch and one Batch (or maybe two) for each year-group.

For 11-18 schools with a ‘Sixth Form’ (7 year-groups) there may be 8 - 9 Batches : one ‘Fixed-Points’ Batch, one Batch for each of Years 7-11, and 1 or more Batches for the ‘Sixth Form’ (Years 12, 13) depending on which method is used for the ‘Sixth Form’ (see Worked Examples 1 - 8 in Section I of the Manual).

You can have more Batches than this (up to a maximum of 20).

For example, if Science is known to be difficult to schedule, and you decide to have an additional Batch consisting only of Science in Upper School.

However it is definitely a mistake to have several small Batches because then **TimeTabler** cannot prioritise the activities for you (see also sections D2, F25).

D2  
F25

If you have a ‘**Sixth Form**’ decide which method you will use (see Section I), as it may affect how many Batches you need to enter.

I1-9

If you have **Blocks** of ‘consistently setted’ subjects (eg. in Years 10, 11), or if you have Blocks of team-taught ‘coordinated science’, decide now which method you will use (see sections H24 and I); it may affect how many Batches you need.

H24  
I11

See also the **HelpMovie** on “When (not) to use Container Blocks”.



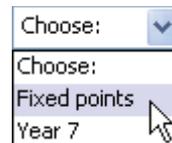
21

Enter a single Batch of your ‘**Fixed-Points**’ activities.

Pre-specify the times if you wish, see H1.

Some examples of ‘Fixed-Points’ (see more in H1):

- “Year 7 PSHE has to be on Thursday period 1”  
(eg. 7ABC S AB CD EF )
- “Year 11 Games is traditionally 3 periods on Wednesday afternoon”  
(eg. 11ABC 3 PE1 PE2 PE3 PE4 )
- “Year 10 go to the local college for 4 periods every Thursday afternoon”  
(eg. 10ABCD q xx with a dummy teacher/special resource, xx)
- “The ‘Diploma Consortium’ agreed Block A would be on Tuesday morning”  
(eg. 10ABCDEF 3 EF GH IJ KL yy )



H1  
D5  
D6

If an activity is to be Locked in position on the timetable, it is wise to pre-Lock them here, so you won’t forget later.



D3  
D6

Remember : at this stage you are only entering activities that need to be scheduled ...but the actual scheduling, to specific times of the week, does not happen until later (step 33).

22



Enter or Edit **other Batches** in turn, choosing a suitable name in each case. D1-6

To enter or edit an Activity use the relevant 'Wizard' (see the HelpMovies).  
It's common to do this in 2 stages, like this: D6

**Stage 1** : Enter/edit the structure, on the Basic Details tab: D8

**Stage 2** : Later, when you know *who* is to teach each group,   
you can add the teachers, using the Staffing tab:

To ask your Heads of Departments (HoDs) **who** is teach each group:

- Use to decide how the curriculum will be covered. See also Chapter 6 in 'The Timetabler's CookBook'. D15
- Use to send out spreadsheets to the HoDs, and then later import their replies into **TimeTabler**. See the HelpMovie. D16
- Use to check each Teacher's load. See D16. D22

D24

You can add Set Numbers (or Letters), and you can customize the Set Labels at CustomizeMenu Set labels. See the HelpMovie. H32

To add labels to your Option Blocks/Columns (on the final printouts) see H31. J9

You can always come back and Edit your activities later if you wish (D6, D8, D17), either before you start scheduling or whenever the activities are showing (not yet assigned) on the Priority Screen (E7) or the Visual Builder Screen (E16). H31

23   
(optional)



If you already have a batch for Year 10 entered, from last year, and the same curriculum applies in the new Year 11, then you can use **ActivitiesMenu** **Promote a Batch** to convert all the Year 10 activities to Year 11, and then Edit them for any staff changes if necessary (see D13, D14). See the HelpMovie. D13

24   
(optional)

If you are using '**Consistent Grouping**' (see H24) or '**Container Blocks**' (see H25) see Worked Examples 3 - 23 in Section I, and the HelpMovies), and make sure you have entered a Consistent Grouping ID or a Container ID correctly. H24

H25  
I

25   
(optional)

Decide if/where you need to use **Global DayBlocking** (see sections D9, D29) to keep 2 lessons on different days. D9

Do not overuse this feature, as it reduces your solution-space! H21

D31

26   
(optional)

At this stage (or later) you may choose to **Clone** one or more of your Batches. This can be useful if you are doing 'What if ...?' trials and you want to try minor variations within a Batch without re-entering all the activities. D13

*For example*, clone a Batch (see H26), and then Edit the clone so that Maths is in single periods not doubles, to see the effect in a new schedule. E5

H26

# Checking and Analysing your activities-data

Check & Validate

**Activities & Curriculum : Check and Validate**

(1)  **Select the SuperBatch** to decide which Activities are to be analysed.  
Current SuperBatch is: **Scheduled + Unlinked**

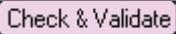
(2) You can then run (one or more of) these tests, if you wish:

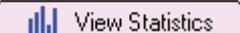
 **View Statistics**  
To review the number of periods entered for each Class & Teacher.

 **Curriculum Diagram**  
To check you have entered all your Activities, with the correct Classes.

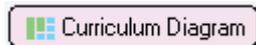
 **Audit & Staff Loading**  
To audit your Curriculum and see the loading for each Teacher.

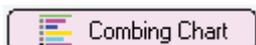
The analyses and tests in this section work best when applied to a complete set of all your Batches. For this reason it is best to enter **all** your Batches before going forward.

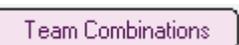
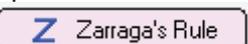
27  Click on the  button to visit the **SuperBatch Screen**. D20  
On this screen (D20) ensure that the SuperBatch contains (only) a complete set of all the Batches that you want to analyse (including the 'Fixed Points' batch).

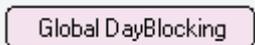
28  Click on the  button. **Check the data carefully**. D21  
Check particularly for a red value in the 'Inclusive' column of the Class statistics. Check also for a red value in the 'Periods' column of the Staff statistics if you chose to enter a 'max' teaching load at step 12.

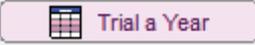
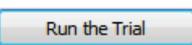
**Ensure you correct any errors before going any further.** D5-8

29  Click on the  button. This is usually the quickest way to see very quickly if you have entered all your activities and structure correctly. D22  
See D22 and the Help button and HelpMovie for details.

30  On the SuperBatch Screen, click on the  button. D26  
(optional) Analyse each subject area in turn. See D25 and the web-site for more details. Any Combing Chart with a red zone should be corrected now. Ideally few will be in the orange zone either. After any changes, always re-draw the Combing Chart to re-check it.

31  Click on the  or  button (these help you to see impossible teacher-team pairings in your data). Click Help for details. D29  
(optional) Or the  button (to find more flexibility in lower school). D30  
D33

Check that you haven't overused **Global DayBlocking**, via:  D32

32  For a good additional **Test**, use:  E  
First choose a Year:  and then: . F6  
After it has been scheduled, consider any kickouts and their implications. G2  
Repeat with each other year-group, so you test each Year in turn.

See also [www.timetabler.com/SupportCentre/HowCanICheckMyDataBatches.pdf](http://www.timetabler.com/SupportCentre/HowCanICheckMyDataBatches.pdf) N

Having checked your data, you are now ready to move to the scheduling stage.

# Scheduling your activities

## 3 Schedule

	Mon	2	3	4	5	Tue	2	3	4	5	Wed	2	3	4	5	Thur	2	3	4
Click:	5	5	0	.	5	.	*1*	2	.	2	.	2	.	.	3	.	.	.	2

You may find it useful to remind yourself of some of the possibilities by re-reading Steps 25-57 of the Tutorial (see Section A). See HelpMovies.

33  Start a **New Schedule** (click on:  then on:  and then click on New) and give it a suitable name, see E1. Specify any Rules for scheduling (see E2). E1  
E2

34  Then on the **Load a Batch Screen**, highlight your first Batch ('Fixed-Points') and then click on . Then click on  E3

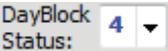
35   Working on the **Priority List Screen** or the **Visual Builder Screen**,  assign each of your Fixed Points activities. See the HelpMovies. Make sure these Fixed Points lessons are Locked in place (this will happen automatically if you pre-Locked them at step 21). E7, E16  
F3  
F15

36  (optional) At this stage you may wish to make several **Clones** of this basic structure. This is sometimes useful if you want to try several 'What if...' runs, each starting with this basic structure. See H27, D13. H27  
D13

37  When one Batch has been completely assigned, click on  to see the Load a Batch Screen again (see F7), and **load in the next batch**. F7  
K3

(In a school with Years 7-13, this new Batch will usually be the Year 11 Batch, but it is your choice. If you have a '6th Form' see the article in the KnowledgeBase.) If the Batch contains a **Container Block** then the *first* thing to do is **R-Reserve** the best time-slots, see H25 and see the 6-page article in the  H25

Continue scheduling. At this stage you will normally be working **Interactively** (see the Tutorial, steps 33-39), bearing in mind the **need to develop a good structure** (see F2, F25). F2  
F25

Most users leave the DayBlock Status  as 4 (the default). E18

Any Ignored activities should be resurrected via the  button. E14

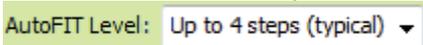
38  If at any stage to see more details of the situation, use the **Staff Timetable Strip** and the **Class Timetable Strip** for this activity or the **Teacher-Inspector**. E12,19  
F17

39  To see more details of  a position on the week-line is marked with a dot (ie. impossible), just click on the dot (in one of these Strips) to see a Report. E13

40  Remember to  **Save** your work regularly. F9  
Remember to **Auto-Backup** (archive) your data **regularly**, and also **Backup** to a memorystick or other external storage (eg. Dropbox) at each key stage. p. x-xi  
p. ix

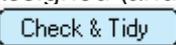
continued...

## Adjusting your Timetable

- 41  If you hit a 'kickout' then use **FIT**  **F5**  
If there is still a problem then see the tactics in Section F6, and the linked PDF. **F6**
- 42  To review and improve the quality of your timetable, click on  to go to the **Quality Optimiser Screen**, and then click on the Report button. **F24**  
To move activities to a better position, use the 'Move' button or Flowchart K9. **K9**  
This is best done after each main stage of the schedule or after each Batch has been assigned.
- 43  Click on  to see the **Staff Timetable Screen**, on which you can see the pattern of a Teacher's lessons. **F12**  
To change the Availability of a Teacher (eg. a Part-timer or to block out bad commuting periods in a split-site school, H28), select a cell and double-click on it. **H3**  
**H28**
- 44  Click on  to see the **Class Timetable Screen**. **F14**  
You can Lock / UnLock or Unassign an activity here. **F16**
- 45  Click on the  button on either the Staff Timetable Screen or the Class Timetable Screen to see the **Edit Details Screen**. **F19, 21**  
This allows you to change the Teacher, Room, Subject or Set number for any lesson on your finished schedule. For another way please see FlowChart K7. **K7**
- 46  If, in **later** stages of your schedule, you choose to change to a different scheduling method (eg. Method 2 : Semi-Auto, or Method 3 : Fully-Auto with AutoFit) then remember to check the DayBlock Status  (most people use 4) and the  (most people use Level 4 or 5, initially). **G**  
**E18**  
**E19**

## Printing your timetables

**4 Print**

- 47  To check that all your lessons have got a **Room** assigned (and a Subject label) **F22, 23**  
and that no Rooms are double-booked), go to :  **J2**  
Use the Edit Details Screen or Room Timetable Screen to make any corrections. **F19, 21**
- 48  Use the Flowchart K11 in conjunction with Section J to design your printouts. **K11**  
Check the Preview carefully before printing. **Untick 'Test page' before printing!** **J**

## Exporting your timetable

**Export**

- 49  To Export the final timetable to SIMS .net, SEEMiS, Arbor, PASS, iSAMS, Engage, SchoolBase, etc, first download the latest step-by-step Guide from our web-site. **L**  
Make sure you have the very latest program by clicking on: >Check for Updates
- 50  If you are Exporting the final timetable to **Options**, in order to print out Individual Student Timetables, see the step-by-step guide in the **Options Handbook**.  
Similarly, to use your timetable data in **StaffCover**, see the **StaffCover Handbook**.

## Notes:

If you are not receiving our free monthly eNewsLetter with its helpful tips on timetabling, please sign on at: [www.timetabler.com](http://www.timetabler.com) (at the bottom of that page).

Then, to ensure that the eNewsLetter gets to your inbox, please ensure (or ask your IT Manager to ensure) that [newsletter@timetabler.info](mailto:newsletter@timetabler.info) is added to your email Address Book or Safe List.

# Three ways to get immediate Help

## 1. Use the Help button or

To search wider, use the Contents or Index tabs at the top of the HelpScreen:



## 2. View the HelpMovies

If you are on-line click on any of the HelpMovie icons:  
This takes you to the full Library of video tutorials.



## 3. Use the 24/7 Support Centre

In *TimeTabler* (or in *Options*, or in *StaffCover*) click on:



to go to the 24/7 Support Centre (if you are on-line):

You can download another copy of the QuickStart Guide from the **Downloads** area.  
(Check the date, see front page, to see if it is later than this one.)

You can click to visit the **KnowledgeBase** to read the many articles.  
You don't need to Login to do this. If you know the topic then the  
quickest way to find an article is to use the **Search Box**:



If you can't find an answer then you can '**Submit a Ticket**' to our Support Staff.  
(The very first time you do this you will need to **Register** in order to **Login**.)