

# Subtract Weeks, Months, or Years From a Date

How to move backward through the calendar without month-end or leap-year mistakes

Subtracting weeks, months, or years isn't the same as subtracting a fixed number of days — months vary in length and years can hold 365 or 366 days. This quick reference covers the rules and gives you the fastest path to a correct answer using TimerStart's **Subtract Days Calculator**.

## Three steps

- 1 Choose your reference date and enter the amount to subtract.
- 2 Select the unit: weeks, months, or years.
- 3 Calculate, then check for a month-end or leap-year adjustment.

## Quick examples

| Unit             | Reference date     | Subtract | Result                   |
|------------------|--------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| Weeks            | September 12       | 4 weeks  | August 15                |
| Months           | July 31, 2027      | 5 months | <b>February 28, 2027</b> |
| Months (leap)    | August 31, 2028    | 6 months | <b>February 29, 2028</b> |
| Years            | September 22, 2027 | 2 years  | September 22, 2025       |
| Years (leap day) | February 29, 2028  | 1 year   | <b>February 28, 2027</b> |

## Two rules to remember

**Shorter target month:** if the original day doesn't exist in the target month, the result moves to that month's final valid day — not an error, just an adjustment. July 31 minus five months always becomes February 28, or February 29 in a leap year.

**February 29:** subtracting a year from a leap day lands on February 28 unless the target year is also a leap year. Four years back from February 29 stays on February 29.

## Not interchangeable

4 weeks = 28 days, but a month can be 28–31 days. 52 weeks = 364 days, one short of a common year. Use the exact unit stated in your source — don't swap weeks for months or years for convenience.

## Common mistakes

- Treating four weeks as one month, or 52 weeks as one year
- Expecting a 31st-day date to still land on the 31st after subtracting into a shorter month
- Forgetting February 29 when subtracting years
- Using an ambiguous date format instead of a written month name
- Assuming every calculator applies the same month-end rule

## Quick FAQ

### Is subtracting 12 months the same as 1 year?

Usually, for ordinary dates — but verify leap-day cases separately.

### Does this include weekends?

Yes — weeks, months, and years move through the calendar continuously.

### Can I use the result for an official deadline?

Use it as a starting point, but confirm anything high-stakes with the relevant authority.

*TimerStart provides general calendar-date calculations. Legal, tax, contract, and other official periods may use specialised rules — confirm important dates with the relevant authority.*