



30 Easy Tips That Will Get You Organized In Your Office!

*Successful organizing is based on the
recognition that people get organized
because they, too, have a vision.
~ Paul Wellstone*

helping busy
people get more
done in less time
with less stress

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office organizing & productivity services 

General Organizing Tips For The Office

1. Create a 'home' for everything

If you don't know where something belongs, how do you know where to put it? Then if you need that particular item, how do you know where to find it? And if you don't have enough room for homes for all your stuff ... you have too much stuff

2. Store similar items together

Categorization is very important when you are getting organized. Keep all bill paying supplies in one place. Gather all of your general office supplies in one designated area. Keep extra file folders, hanging files and file labels together. When you need to work on something, everything should be easily accessible.

3. Use one calendar

The biggest mistake people make when using calendars is keeping more than one. Keeping business, personal and family activities on one calendar will eliminate missed appointments and scheduling conflicts.

4. Determine your goals

Before you start anything, determine its goal. If you don't know where you are going, how will you ever get there?

5. Put things away each day

It really only takes a few seconds to put things back where they belong. If you cannot put items back immediately, make a pile of stuff to put away before you leave the office for the evening.

6. Decide now

Most office clutter is simply a result of deferring a decision. Decide where it belongs and put it there immediately. This will only take you a few seconds longer, and will eliminate large piles of deferred decisions to deal with down the road.

7. Have the proper tools on hand

It is too difficult to do a job right when the tools are not on hand, or if you are improperly equipped. Determine the supplies you require and purchase them. Need scissors? Get yourself a pair. Keep a pad of paper and a good supply of pens by your phone. Do you create files regularly? Keep a good supply in your drawer.

8. Create an effective work area

Create a pleasant, well-equipped work area. Whether it is a nook with a small desk or a large office, your work area must be conducive to performing your daily work. It should contain all necessary supplies and equipment within arms reach or in easily accessible areas.

9. Clear your workspace

Clear it of everything but the project you are working on to cut down on distractions. If you have several projects at one time, create folders for each one and only open the one you are currently focusing on. At the end of each project or event, organize your paperwork and file it or store it. You will work better when you have only one thing capturing your attention.

10. Be ruthless

Purge your desk, desk drawers, shelves, credenzas and files of all the outdated and unconscious "they're-there-because-you-never-know-when-you-may-need-them" stuff. If you have not used an item in the last year you are not likely to need it again. Do you really want a clutter free, streamlined office or not?

Ending The Paper Nightmare

11. Question every piece of paper

Paper creates one of the biggest time and storage space challenges today. When dealing with paperwork you should always ask yourself these three questions: "Will I really do anything with it?" "When will I do it?" and "Where will I keep it?" Do something with paper only if it helps achieve your goals.

12. Centralize your notes

Keep all of your notes to yourself in a single place, whether in a notebook, a paper organizer, or on your computer. My favorite tool is a spiral notebook that I keep by my phone. It's handy for all notes, messages and miscellaneous information.

13. Organize your action files

These files should be kept on top of your desk (a stepped sorter is best for visual clarity), and make a file for each of the following categories: **To Do**, **To Read**, **To File**, **Today**. Here are a few other categories you can use as well: **To Pay**, **To Answer**, **To Attend** (as in go to - i.e. tickets you want to purchase for an upcoming event, or also to look into registering for a course). These are active files, so paper should always be attended to then moved out of these file folders.

14. Don't overstuff filing cabinets

There is nothing worse than having to file papers in a file cabinet that is overloaded. Leave enough room in the drawers so that you are not using all of your energy to get a piece of paper in or out. Keep this statistic in mind when filing: 80% of what we file is never even looked at again! Maybe it's time to purge the old files.

15. Analyze the flow

Look over your paperwork on a regular basis to see what can be eliminated, shortened, modified, combined or otherwise improved.

16. Determine paper's importance

First, before you file anything, be sure it is truly necessary to keep. Remember the 80% rule about what we file. You only want to file papers that:

- a) you need to keep for legal or financial reasons and
- b) you are very likely to reference in the near future, and that you won't be able to easily access somewhere else.

17. The ART of paper management

There are really only 3 things to do with a piece of paper:

Act on it – you need to do something with it.

Reference – you need to keep it. File it away.

Trash it – this particular step should not be taken lightly. A large percentage of the papers in your office (except for legal or tax related documents), especially the ones in boxes and piles that have not been looked at for months or even years, can probably be trashed.

18. Open mail over the trashcan

When you get your mail each day, quickly open it right over the wastebasket or your recycling bucket. Dump the junk mail immediately. You know what it looks like so don't even open it. Get rid of the offers and unnecessary inserts that come with your bills, then sort the rest of your mail into your Action Files, so that it does not have a chance to pile up.

19. File every day

If you hate filing, I'm guessing that one of the primary reasons is because you are overwhelmed with your current filing situation. If you only had 1 or 2 pieces of paper to file, you likely wouldn't see the task as so daunting. Once your paperwork is organized and an effective filing system is in place, filing will become an easier task.

20. Don't make extra copies

Many people make extra copies of documents, just in case they are needed later. Very often, this results in an excess of copies that never get used. Don't make copies until you truly need them. And do not add to other people's paperwork nightmares by giving them copies of something they really don't need.

21. Don't print everything

You would think because everyone has computers these days that the paper clutter has been reduced. One of the reasons for this excess paper is that people are printing things that do not need to be printed. Most emails can be responded to and deleted immediately. The rest can be temporarily stored in email folders until you no longer require them. Just beware of virtual clutter. The same rules for avoiding paper pile-ups also apply to the files on your computer. Otherwise you are bound to have a digital document nightmare to deal with.

Tips For Getting Stuff Done

24. Schedule regular work sessions

Prioritize tasks for each day and set aside time to complete them. Make an 'appointment' with yourself to do the tasks – and keep it. Resist the urge to allow less important stuff to get in the way of your important stuff. Learn to say “no” to unimportant tasks.

25. Work with your energy cycles

Tackle your most difficult or important work during the time of day when you are at your best and you are most likely to complete it.

26. Do it now

If a task will take two minutes or less to complete ... do it now! Don't waste time looking at it and then postponing it to later,

22. Get real about your reading

Many people keep magazines, newspapers, newsletters, and other reading material for reading 'someday.' Unfortunately, there is generally more papers in the 'To Read' pile than there is available time. Be realistic. Toss out old reading material. Get rid of outdated newspapers. Ditch magazines older than 6 months. Yes, I know there is probably a lot of valuable information in those piles but how will you ever find what you need when you need it?

23. Use a tickler file

This is the best paper management system I have worked with yet. Use it to keep track of future work, follow-ups and tasks. This system is a perfect complement to your calendar. For example, if you have a meeting scheduled and you will need to remember to bring a particular document to it, mark 'TF' beside your meeting details to remind you where you put the paperwork. This is just one of the many ways a Tickler File can help control the paper beast. For information on how to set one up visit my website at www.smartworksinc.ca under the Tips tab.

27. Use master lists & to-do lists

Here is how you use them: A *Master List* is an inventory of all of your tasks and commitments. It can be any length and it should be easily accessible as you are always adding to it. A daily *To Do List* is made up of selected items from the Master List that must be done TODAY. When used properly, these effective tools give you a clear idea of what you need to accomplish. Don't overload your daily to do list, and only those items that are truly important or time sensitive should be put there. Remember, it is a 'daily' to do list.

'Do it now' continued ...

just do it. You'll be amazed at how much better you'll feel when that niggly task is done.

Productivity Quick Tips

28. Take control of your time

- Schedule more time for tasks than you think it will take.
- Delegate whenever possible.
- Be time-conscious rather than a perfectionist.
- Schedule time for the unexpected interruptions in your day.
- Keep telephone conversations brief; discuss the business up front.
- Say “no” more often. Have as much respect for your own time as you have for others’.
- Do not keep shuffling papers; handle only once whenever possible.
- Be in control of your own life; do not let others’ lack of planning become your crisis.
- When leaving a message for someone to call you back, indicate a convenient time to call.
- Record the time you must “leave” the office when traveling to a distant meeting.
- If you are distracted by items being dropped into your in-basket, remove it from your desk.

- Schedule specific amounts of time to review and dispense with your email.
- Recognize you cannot do everything. Work on the 20% that produces 80% of your results.

29. End each day on a good note

Save your easier tasks for the end of each day. You’ll be able to complete them, and end each day with a positive and rewarding feeling.

30. Seek to continuously improve

Get and stay organized with the many products and tips available on the market today.

These handy organizing tips will get you back on track and in control of your workspace in no time at all. Don’t overdo it though, just pick a few to start with and watch the results!

Being organized leaves your mind free for other things and allows plenty of time for all you want to do. So give these a try.

What have you got to lose?

Make it a productive day!!



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About the Author

Georgina is Your Organizing Expert!

She is a fun, friendly and creative Productivity Consultant and Professional Organizer who shows busy people easy ways to get more done in less time with less stress.

Her background includes over 25 years in various administrative and office management functions, which was a great training ground for becoming better organized. But that is not her 'claim to fame' ...

... it is the fact that she struggles with organizing and time management herself.

Why is this important to know?

She gets how difficult it can seem, however, has learned some simple ways to help her clients get back on track and in control of their day.

She believes that if a former 'messy' and recovering perfectionist – such as herself - can learn how to get organized (and even teach others how to do it) then anyone can do it.

Disorganization is just a dilemma that needs to be solved – it is not a character flaw!

With a little bit of help you can easily become an 'expert' at being organized.



Services

Smartworks! is a Calgary-based organizing and productivity consulting company that provides effective organizing solutions for busy professionals to manage their time, increase productivity and gain control of their workspace.

Smartworks starts your project with a Personal Productivity Assessment Questionnaire. This assessment targets the 4 main areas that are critical to increasing your personal productivity.

Ask me how you can get your Personal Productivity Assessment today.

Smartworks! provides the following services:

- Productivity Coaching
- Office Organizing
- Electronic Organizing
- Email Management
- Virtual Organizing
- Process Development
- Lunch & Learn Presentations
- Workshops & Training
- Speaking