

10 Tips for Getting on Top of Your Paperwork

Are you on top of your paperwork, or is your paperwork getting on top of you?

With a little effort and possibly a little help too, you can have it under control, permanently.

Here are ten tips to help you on your way:

1. **Round it up:**

A great place to start is to gather up all your paperwork, especially if it's scattered throughout your home and car, and contain it. Visual clutter leads to mental clutter and can be really overwhelming to deal with, especially when everywhere you look, it seems there's another piece of paperwork you need to attend to. Once you have all your paperwork in one place, it's easier to sort through and deal with.

2. **Have nice, easily accessible places for your paperwork to go:**

When everything has its place, it's easier to keep everything in its place. I've recently discovered a great shop in Adelaide called Sorted Space, where you can buy all sorts of storage and paper-handling products. Belinda of Sorted Space also runs a very helpful workshop called Sorted Paper which I recently attended. In it, she explains a four-step process for managing paperwork, with storage solutions to match. And, all over a glass of bubbly. Very civilized. As a result, I'm happy to say that all of the recipes I've torn out of magazines are now nicely filed away, and referenced so I can easily find them, in a recipe folder in my kitchen. For details of next month's Sorted Paper workshop, see the Sorted Space advertisement at the end of this e-zine.

3. **Create an ACTION! file:**

If you're not already doing so, create an ACTION file for any pieces of paperwork that need to be actioned, from RSVP'ing to an invitation, to making out an insurance claim. This way, you'll have the comfort of knowing that everything you need to action is contained in one place.

4. **Open your mail over a bin:**

A great way to handle mail is to open it over a bin. This way, you can quickly throw away junk mail without even opening it.

5. **Work with a professional organiser:**

If you could use a bit of advice and help in setting up effective paperwork systems in your home or office, invest in the services of a professional organiser. They'll be able to create tailor-made structures to support you to easily keep your paperwork under control.

For more business, executive or life coaching tips and strategies to help you achieve your goals and create and live the life you've always wanted, as well as information on one-to-one coaching to help you get there, visit www.blueskycoaching.com.au or contact Tania below.

6. Hire a bookkeeper:

Do you have other things you'd rather do than keep your financial paperwork up-to-date? A bookkeeper can help you keep your financial paperwork in order and among other things, ensure all your bills are paid on time. No more late fees!

7. Set aside a regular time for managing your paperwork:

If it helps you, diarise when you'll attend to your paperwork and honour this appointment time as you would any other appointment in your diary. It could be once a week, fortnightly or daily, depending on how much paperwork you need to handle and whether or not you have a back log to get in order.

8. Purge old files and paperwork:

Can't open your filing cabinet anymore because it's so full of stuff? Don't even know what it's full of anymore? Then, it's time to purge old files. Set aside some time, at least once a year, to de-clutter your filing system and get rid of any paperwork that you no longer need to hold on to. In Australia, in most cases, paperwork only needs to be kept for five years. Check this with your Accountant as some bits of paperwork, such as legal documents and paperwork for valuables will need to be kept for longer.

9. Delegate it!:

If you really can't picture yourself happily attending to your paperwork on a regular basis, either hire a personal assistant to do this for you, or, at home, delegate this job to a willing member of your family.

10. Start a tidy desk policy:

One of the best practices you can adopt, is tidying your workspace at the end of each day. You'll find, both, walking away from a tidy workspace at the end of the day, and starting each day with a clean slate, really energising.

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