



Ten Easy Tips to Keep Your Desk Clean

1. **Think twice before automatically filing your papers.** Do you need it? Do you use it? Is it available somewhere else? What is the worst that could happen if you don't keep it? Keep the source; lose the paper.
2. **Work on one task or project at a time and clean up after you are finished.**
3. **Set up action files for batch processing or recurring work.**
4. **Write tasks on a master task list and file papers in action files.**
5. **Open mail only when you have time to process it and put it where it belongs.** Keep a trash can and shredder handy to immediately toss unneeded papers and destroy sensitive information properly.
6. **Establish daily, weekly, and monthly routines to manage paperwork.** Routines give your day structure and help ensure that things are done on schedule.
7. **Use idle time wisely.** File, straighten, or put away items on your desk while your computer boots up or while on the phone.
8. **Location, location, location.** Keep often-used files at arm's length for easy filing and retrieval. Seldom-used or archived information can be stored in sturdy file boxes away from your desk. Important documents should be stored in a fire-resistant safe for safety and easy access.
9. **Sort and purge your files regularly, and at least annually.** File any supporting tax documentation with your tax information. Archive old records that you need to retain but don't need to keep at your desk.
10. **Weed constantly.** The continuous inflow of paperwork requires constant attention to keep from piling up and becoming overwhelming. Just 15 minutes a day can keep your desk clean and in order.

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