

Top Tips for Getting Organised

Being organised can help you become more effective and efficient, as well as making you feel more in control of your workload. These top tips will help you become better organised at work.



Plan and prioritise

Do some advance planning. Think about when things need to be done, what time is available and who/what else you might need to do your work effectively.

Prioritise your workload. Identify the tasks that are time-critical and/or urgent, and tackle these before moving on to lower priority tasks. Once you have identified your main tasks, break the larger ones down into smaller chunks and tackle them one by one - they will seem less daunting that way.

Use other people. Utilise their skills and talents by delegating where appropriate.

Use to-do lists

Keep a to-do list recording everything you have to do each day, to make sure you **don't forget anything**. Depending on how you like to work, you can do this using a pen and paper, a spreadsheet, your email calendar or one of the many free online list management tools available. [1]

To remain organised throughout the day, you might find it helpful to include **personal tasks and errands** on your 'to-do' list that you might need to complete over lunchtime or before/after work.

Tick off tasks on your to-do list as you complete them. Not only will this help you keep

A well-organized garage with two black metal tracks mounted on a beige wall. The top track holds various tools like a shovel, pitchfork, and a yellow step ladder, as well as sports equipment like a tennis racket and a hockey stick. The bottom track holds a blue bicycle. To the right, a wire shelf holds a green duffel bag, a red cooler, and other items. A white door is on the left, and a blue cooler sits on the floor on the right.

Put your recurring (daily, weekly, monthly etc.) tasks into a **schedule** or **diary**. This will help you to remember what you need to do, and will also allow you to see at a glance how much time you have left to tackle other tasks. Online calendars can also be set up to send you **reminders** for recurring events – often delivered to a smartphone.

Own your time. Protect it by blocking it out in your diary. When you have a pressing deadline, consider working from a quiet location free from distractions and disruptions. If this is not possible, make sure people know not to interrupt you. There are many simple ways you can do this, e.g. by sending round an email asking people only to speak to you if it's urgent, or putting a little 'Do Not Disturb' sign on your desk.

Make sure you have quick and easy access to the **key information sources** you need to complete your work, e.g. client files, production schedules, account information etc. If you are working remotely, ensure you have the necessary information to complete your work and that you can access it while away from your office desk. Software and tools like **remote desktop access** or [Google Drive](#) can help make working remotely on a regular basis a smooth process.

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to let people know that you will respond to their messages when you are available. **Avoid the temptation to constantly check your messages** - set aside specific times in the day for doing this.



Manage incoming work

Have a **clear in-tray policy**, where you make sure you take action on everything in your in-tray regularly. If it helps, set aside time in your diary for this.

You should also aim to have a **clear email inbox policy**, where emails are read, replied to, forwarded or filed appropriately at regular intervals. Consider using email filters and create a series of sub-folders in your inbox where you can file away important emails that relate to a particular subject or that have been sent by a specific person or organisation.

Spring clean

A tidy desk = a tidy mind. Clear all the clutter from your physical and 'virtual' workspaces (for example, your in-tray, your PC's desktop screen, your email inbox). File what you need to keep and throw away anything you don't need. Do this regularly (for example, weekly) and you will stop the clutter from building up again.

Sort paperwork into three piles:

1. keep
2. throw away
3. not sure

File everything you want to keep, dispose of anything in the 'throw away' pile and put the 'not sure' pile into a separate box or drawer. If you have not looked at anything in this box after a set period of time (say, for example, one month) then consider **throwing them away** or **archiving them**.

Don't forget your computer. For example, clean up the desktop. A cluttered desktop is not only bad for your personal organisation, it actually **slows down your computer**. The same applies to storing files directly on your C: drive. You should always store files in folders to optimise your computer's performance. Also use folders to organise your bookmarked internet sites and emails, and archive/delete any old emails you will never need.

[1] Examples of online tools include [Todoist](#), [Toodledo](#) and [Remember The Milk](#), while Getting Things Done is a more holistic time and task management solution.

- **Garage Image Credit:** Flickr user [Rubbermaid Products](#) (accessed 15 August 2014).
- **Towels Image Credit:** Flickr user [EvelynGiggles](#) (accessed 8 October 2015).