

Creating an Organized To Do List



Creating an organized to do list is one of the best things you can do to make sure that your daily tasks are getting completed. You have many different tasks, papers and forms to deal with and creating an organized to do list can be done in just a few simple steps.

Get Organized for Action

If you want an organized to do list you must keep paper moving through your system (instead of stagnating on your desk). The first step to creating an organized to do list is to “verb” each action. That means sorting according to the action required. Start with the nearest pile, ask yourself what you need to do with each item and create a folder for each answer. You’ll probably come up with categories like:

- “to pay”
- “to file”
- “to contact”
- “to buy”
- “to read”
- “to enter in computer”
- “to reconcile”
- “to give to _____”

Set these folders up in a file box or rack, placed in plain view. The goal is to break that pile down into just a few action categories and to give new paper a place to live until you have a chance to tackle it. Each day, take just a minute to go through the new to-do’s and you will have an organized to do list!

Revamp Your Schedule

Another key to keeping an organized to do list is to make sure you have enough time to accomplish everything. Don’t wait until you have time. You must make time. Schedule a regular weekly appointment with yourself – maybe an hour or two, once or twice a week – and block off that slot for “admin time”. During admin time, your goal is to go through



each folder in order and try to complete every item inside. If you can't complete that item for some reason, put it back in the folder and tackle it during your next admin period. And if you finish one step (say, paying a bill), but then realize that you have another step to take with that paper (perhaps calling to correct a billing error), move it to the appropriate folder for that next step. This will help you maintain an organized to do list.

Consolidate Your Efforts

Why would you worry about working through one folder before moving to the next? You will accomplish more in less time when you complete each activity in sequence (paying all of your bills at once, then making all of your calls, then doing all of your filing) – as opposed to bopping back and forth between different tasks. Take a “mass production” tip from Henry Ford – your work will get done faster and easier if you focus on one category at a time.

Sit Back and Relax

If you follow this system, you will have an efficient and easy to follow organized to do list. You'll never accumulate more than a week's worth of paper at any time and will have no reason to miss a deadline or pay a bill late. With an organized to do list you don't have to continually worry, “When will I get it all done”, because you know that any to-do's will be taken care of during your next regular admin period.

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