



Paper Management At Home

Simplify managing the paper in your home by using the 'Five times Three' method: Five steps in three categories. Here's how to break it down:

Five Incoming "Documents"

Most paper comes into the home in one of five ways:

1. Paper: All mail, papers from work, from travel, memorabilia, kids' schoolwork, etc.
2. E-Mail: Printed out from a computer
3. Voice mail: Hand written from a phone message
4. Verbal requests: From family, friends, and others that end up as paper
5. Your ideas: Your own projects, ideas and hobbies in the form of paper, books or magazines.

The Five Decisions

Narrow down your decisions by making one of five choices for all incoming documents:

1. Discard: Basic premise of staying organized. Get tough! Trust your judgment: do I really have time to read, to take care of, or to waste on this?
2. Delegate: Does it belong to someone else or can somebody else take care of this? It may not be done 'your' way, but it's one less thing on your plate.
3. Take immediate action: If it takes 60 seconds (general guideline) or less, do it now. This is another basic premise of staying organized.
4. To be filed: No action required, but needed for future reference. File in a simple filing system for easy retrieval (see Filing System Simplified).
5. Needs follow-up: Additional 'work' needed at a later time (see below).

Five Follow-Up Categories

Follow-up documents generally fall into five categories:

1. Invitations, phone calls to be made: Keep on a bulletin board in plain view, review often and complete often.
2. Gift cards & coupons to use: Keep them in your purse or wallet or car so they are ready to use.
3. Bills, papers to read and sign and return: Place papers to read and bills to pay where you write bills. Take care of both at bill-paying time.
4. Kid's art and memories to save: Place in a bin or file basket to go through once or twice a year. Don't make those decisions daily.
5. Reading material and catalogs: Place in one area by a reading chair. Make it portable so you can grab it when you are on the go. Discard old catalogs, replace with newest in alphabetical order.

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