



Paper Management At Home

Simplify the management of 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. Mail: All snail mail including bills, junk mail, magazines, newspapers.
2. Computer Mail: Printed out from the Internet or email.
3. Voice Mail or Messages: Hand written messages from phone or others.
4. Your Paper: Your own paper for projects, ideas, and hobbies.
5. Other Paper: Photos, memories, school work, art projects.

The Five Decisions

Narrow down your decisions by making one of five choices:

1. Discard: 1st step to staying organized. Get tough! Trust your judgment. Ask yourself: "Do I really have time to read this, time to take care of this, or time to waste on this? If I had all week, would I choose to do/read this?"
2. Do it Now: 2nd step to staying organized: If it takes 60 seconds or less, do it now! Waiting to do these tasks will end up as clutter.
3. Pass the Buck: Have a home to place mail for other people; place gift cards and coupons in your car or purse. Can someone else take care of this? Delegate when you can!
4. To Be Filed: Keep paper if needed for taxes or future retrieval. Keep filing system SIMPLE. Use available on-line resources instead of keeping paper.
5. Follow-up Needed: Anything that takes longer than 60 seconds to complete (see below).

Five Follow-Up Categories

Follow-up documents generally fall into five categories:

1. Bills: Place bills in one place where you pay the bills.
2. Papers to examine/sign/make phone calls: Place these 'longer than 60 seconds' projects in one place that is visible so you take care of them.
3. Reading Material: Place newspapers, catalog, and magazines by your reading spot. Make it portable so you can grab it when you are on the go. Discard old catalogs/ magazines, replace with newest in alphabetical order.
4. Memories: Have a permanent home to view and to save all artwork, school papers, photos, and memories. View is short-term, save is long-term.
5. Your own category! There are some things that are common to you and your family. Deal with it as needed and be realistic. Are you keeping memories because you'll view them later or you think others will?

Don't be afraid to change the system as needed or as your life changes. It's always a work in process!

2016