

# The Great Paper Chase!

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Do you ever feel like you just can't keep up with the amount of paper coming into your home? That's no surprise. We're constantly bombarded with it. If from no other source, we all get mail once a day (except Sundays) which continues the flow of newspapers, junk mail, letters, bills, etc. into our world. To address this problem at its source, try these tips for keeping things under control:

1. Identify the best place for you to sit down and sort through the daily mail. Wherever that place is, make sure you have the ability to spread out temporarily while you perform this task.
2. Have a garbage can on-hand. All junk mail should be ripped up and thrown away immediately. There's no need to let it sit around the house. (Please note, if the junk mail contains personal information, it is strongly recommended that you shred these documents.)
3. Sort the mail into piles by what the items are: bills to pay, things to do (i.e., an invitation that requires a response), newspapers/magazines to read, things to file (i.e., bank/investment statements), and maybe a separate pile for you, your spouse and/or kids for personal mail.
4. If you're unable to act on these piles right away, identify a place for those items to be stored until you do have the time. Store the items where the activity is going to take place. For instance, the bills needing to be paid can go in a file folder and then be placed in the home office or on the kitchen desk or wherever it is that you pay your bills; magazines may go in a magazine rack or basket in the living room; the invitation that needs a response might go on a bulletin board or in a calendar.
5. Setting up a small file box in your designated sorting place with a few folders in it that reference the categories listed above may be a quick and convenient way to deal with the mail each day. The box will also serve as a temporary, and mobile, container for you to use to distribute the mail.

The object is to sort the mail and get each piece to its final destination as easily as possible. By taking just a few minutes out of your day to follow these steps, you can make a big difference in eliminating the potential for added clutter.

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