

# 4 Mistakes That Keep You from Being Organized

## 1. Keeping piles of paperwork on your desktop.

This occurs because (a) you don't have time to file it (b) you don't know where to file it (c) you're afraid you'll forget it if it is out of sight. Of course what happens is there is so much on the desk, you can't find anything.

One reason the piles begin and grow bigger is because you are...

## 2. Not following simple daily routines and systems.

It tends to be the little things that are done consistently that make the biggest difference. No one wants to pile up clutter for months and then face an overwhelming cleanup task. Follow the same principle for keeping your work area functional as you do in maintaining good oral health. That's achieved by brushing your teeth for 2 minutes everyday, not for 12 hours once a year!

One idea is to take 10 minutes a day for a specific cleanup task, so you can keep your office organized without it being a major project (once you've done the initial cleanup). Choose what tasks you need to do and what days you want to do them. For example:

**Mondays - de-clutter.** Remove an item which you don't use at least monthly. Throw away pens that don't work, vendor gifts you won't use, and magazines you've read.

**Tuesdays - stay up-to-date.** Read paper and online industry newsletters and magazines. Sign up for a computer class or networking event.

**Wednesdays - catch up.** Go through all those business cards and small pieces of paper which have accumulated on your desktop. Scan, file, or throw them away, but don't leave them on the desk.

**Thursdays - take inventory.** Review your supplies and make a list or place an order. Create new files you need, store closed project/inactive client files.

**Fridays - file.** End your week by cleaning up all the paper lying around your office. Throw it away or file it. Filing is everyone's least favorite task, but doing it at least once a week is much quicker than tackling it once a month or quarter, and it allows you to work clutter-free.

This idea is one of thousands of hints, tips, and systems offered by all kinds of 'experts'.

However, many of them will not be right for you. Quit...

## 3. Trying to implement a system touted in magazines, on TV, or by friends without taking into consideration your own organizing style.

Not every system is for every person. You'll get frustrated and begin to feel you are "hopelessly disorganized" if you can't implement or maintain it, even though it was never the right fit for you.

Most importantly, don't catch yourself...

**4. Having unrealistic expectations about what 'organized' means.** Your workspace does not have to have totally clear work surfaces and intricate filing systems, although it can. 'Organized' simply means you can easily find what you need when you need it - locate a document, retrieve a contact name, or find a file in three minutes. If it works for you, then it works!