

CLEAR YOUR DESK

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You are not alone

To spread the word about my Space Organising business I go to networking meetings and events. I love meeting new people and as soon as I tell them what I do, they tell me all about their 'clutter nightmares'

These fellow networkers are entrepreneurs, have new and emerging businesses or are self employed people and (more often than not) they run their business from home. One thing they all say is 'I could do with you coming to tidy my desk!'

Don't kid your self

Doing any kind of work from a messy desk is stressful. Don't kid your self it is because 'you have a creative mind' or you like to 'keep several projects on the go'. You are confused and wasting time! You can still be creative and multi-task with a tidy desk

Perhaps you could be more creative and do more with a bigger space, a clear mind and access to all your research and materials
IF YOU HAD A TIDY DESK!

Solve the problem

Here are few ideas for clearing your desk and keeping on top of the endless stream of paperwork. In no time at all you will have a space on you desk for the work you are doing, you will be able to find the phone and be able dip into your files and pull out the very thing you were looking for! Now doesn't that sound efficient and professional?

CLEAR YOUR DESK

Step One : Time

Set aside TIME to do the job. If you only have five minutes choose one short step and complete it before you start anything else

Step Two : Tools

Arm yourself with trays (or A4 paper boxes), files and binders, a stapler and paper clips, felt tip and highlighter pens in several colours, a litter bin and a shredder

Step Three : Take apart

Remove all the non-paper items from your desk apart from the necessary tidying equipment (above). Place them all in a box to one side for now

Step Four : Together



Find every piece of 'floating' paper you can lay your hands on and collect it together in a big pile! Look beyond your desk to the surrounding surface and in your briefcase. Leave anything that is already filed. (See the FREE Paper Chase pages on the website for clearing masses of files and papers)

Quick Fix: Take everything off your notice board and only pin back what is relevant or inspiring

Step Five : Touch

The aim is to pick up each piece of paper as few times as possible

Label your boxes or trays with headings like Personal, Financial, Work. If you are ready you can insert sub-headings For example in the 'Personal' tray you might have 'Children', 'House Information' or 'Garden ideas' In the Financial tray you may have 'Savings and Investments', 'Bank Statements', or 'Credit Card Bills'

Step Six : Test questions

Ask yourself these test questions and put it in one of your trays



- Does it belong to me?** Is it my responsibility to deal with this or can I delegate it to someone else? Pass it on
- Do I know what is it about?** Is it personal, financial, work related, which topic? Place it in the appropriate tray or file it immediately (if it has a home to go to)
- Do I need to keep it or can I just extract the vital information and get rid of it?** Sometimes we keep reams of papers and letters when the only piece of information we need is contained in one sentence! Use a highlighter pen to select the piece of information you need, then put it in the appropriate tray

•**Do I really want it?**

Is it something I could get easily again if I wanted it?
Am I really going to look through this catalogue, read this booklet or send off for this offer?

Tip: I keep a basket next to my desk into which I toss any colourful brochures, catalogues, magazines etc. When I do get a moment (waiting for an appointment or for the dinner to cook) I go through them and look longingly at the pictures, then throw away the ones I know I will never need again. Remember that most stores have online catalogues

It doesn't matter how many I throw away, they just keep on coming!



Step Seven : The Trays

Selecting one tray at a time (remember the headings 'Financial' 'House' etc?) and ask yourself these questions:

- Is it urgent? Do I need to deal with it immediately?** Unpaid bills, credit card due dates, application forms, sending a CV, responding to a client or supplier. Mark it in the top right hand corner with a red star (or what ever will catch your attention) and put it in a tray marked 'NOW'
- Does it need to be dealt with by a certain date?** Mark the date in the top right hand corner and place in date order in another tray marked 'DUE BY'
- Does it need filing away?** Have you dealt with it, paid it, replied to it and checked whether you really need to keep it? Set up a ring binder for each category you need to file (Client Information, Suppliers Correspondence, Forthcoming Events & Exhibitions etc)
- If it is a highlighted note decide where to store it:** in your computer, written out on an A4 piece of paper and filed with other similar data

Step Eight : Toss it

Shred any piece of paper that has your name and address, any account details, any credit information etc and put it in the paper recycling bin

If you keep your desk clear of clutter you will find that your mind clears too. Working in a calm environment will help you to focus on the task in hand. Give your desk (and your mind!) a gentle tidy at the end of every working day and you will be able to approach your work with a clear head every morning!

One step at a time, you will **make space for life**

Angie

If you are feeling overwhelmed and would like some help to organise your home, your business or your life contact us at - office@spaceorganising.com or visit the website to find out how we can help over the phone or by email

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