



Master Your Inbox

The Inbox Simplicity Sprint

A simple initiative to organize and simplify your inbox by automatically filtering, categorizing and labelling incoming emails. There are two simple objectives:

1. Reduce Incoming Clutter By 60%

Unsubscribe from unwanted newsletters/subscriptions, mark spam, archive or delete things that don't belong in your inbox.

2. Categorize & Automate 80% Incoming Emails

Develop filters and tags that get set automatically and accurately

After a few weeks: Incoming emails should be mostly automated for you, so that you can immediately find and focus on important emails first.

1

Setup Email Categories & Labels/Folders

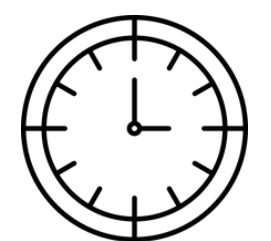
Not all email is created equal. These help you organize emails, separating the wheat from the chaff. A good system lets you make quick decisions, knowing which emails really require immediate attention and/or effort.

There are three types of labels you should have:

1. **Category:** the theme/topic of the email
2. **Priority:** the urgency or importance of the email
3. **Status:** actions that need to be taken



Frequency: One-off



Time Investment: 20 minutes

Example Categories

Personal Emails:

- Friends & Family
- Hobbies & Interests
- Social Events
- Personal Finance
- Health & Wellness

Work Emails:

- Projects & Tasks
- Meetings & Appointments
- Important Documents
- Team Communication
- Reports & Analytics

Example Priorities

By Sender:

- Boss/Supervisor
- Team Member
- Client
- Spouse/Partner/Family
- CC (not addressed directly to you)

By Urgency:

- Now
- Today
- This Week

Example Statuses

By Action:

- Active
- Waiting
- Follow Up
- Completed
- Archived

Your First Action

Spend 20 minutes to go through your current emails.

- What is the nature of your main communication?
- Which types of emails are must reads? Which ones are not?
- Which types of emails do you generally need to respond to?
- What are the timeframes for your responses?

Start setting your categories and labels up on your email platform. Not sure how?

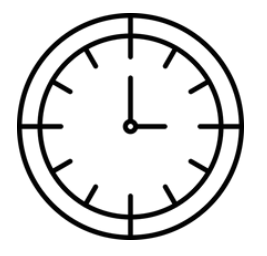
- [How to setup labels in Gmail](#)
- [How to setup tags & categories in Outlook](#)

Categorize, Filter and Automate

Schedule a fixed time each day to **apply your new system** of categories and labels.



Frequency: Daily



Time Investment: 15-20 minutes

Action Steps

At the start of your daily email checking session, go through these steps to process your incoming emails instead of your regular routine.

1. Start with new incoming emails first.

Go through them one by one. If you have time after handling new emails, you can go through older emails you haven't processed yet.

2. Determine the Category, Priority and Status.

An email can have more than one label or tag.

3. Figure out the conditions.

Go through the thought process you used to decide why this email has these associated labels.



Tips

Is it addressed directly to you?

Is the email addressed to you, or are you just part of a CC group list? Generally emails directly for you tend to have higher priority.

- [How to filter by CC emails in Gmail](#)
- [How to filter by CC emails in Outlook](#)

Are there specific keywords?

Were there specific words or phrases that have a clear indication of the type of email message it is? Try creating a filter to automatically catch it.

- [How to filter by keywords in Gmail](#)
- [How to filter by keywords in Outlook](#)

Is it from an important person?

Emails from, say, your boss, spouse or important clients may always take priority no matter what. You can easily set filters by email sender to catch these and tag them.

4. Create & Test Your Filters.

Create filters based on your conditions. If you find that you need a new type of label/tag/category, you can create them during this step.

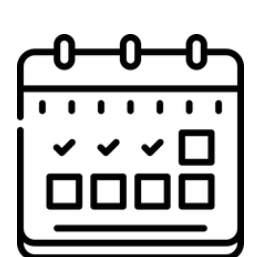
Right after you create a filter, most email clients will show you a list of emails that it catches right away.

Quickly browse through them to make sure there are no major differences from what you expect, like important emails being tagged wrongfully.

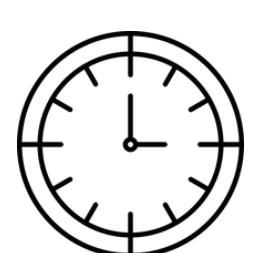
Here you can catch possible spelling mistakes (e.g. in an email address) and other things before you set your automation.

Quick Check Up

After Step #2, go through your main categories and check for misplaced emails. This is to make sure that you don't miss anything important by accident and can catch emails that might have slipped through the cracks.



Frequency: Daily



Time Investment: 5 minutes