

# Emails

Too Much Information,  
Too Little Time?



[www.everylittlething.co.uk](http://www.everylittlething.co.uk)

# Too much information, too little time...

*90% of adulthood is a constant battle between deleting emails and keeping your devices charged.*

Unknown

Do you feel overwhelmed by the amount of information flooding into your inbox and under pressure to constantly keep checking in case you miss something? Do you know how to easily find information that you need without having to scroll through hundreds of emails? Do you know what's important in your inbox and what's not?

You can feel anxious at the thought of having to log in, download, process, and action all the information presented to you on a daily basis. And then when you finally get round to clearing your emails another 20 come in and you're back to the beginning. Trying to keep your inbox clear can feel like digging a hole, you dig and dig and then more dirt falls in.

We sometimes wish that all our emails would just disappear and that we could start afresh with an empty inbox, but, if you are not brave enough to delete your email account and start again, decluttering and organising your inbox will make it much easier to manage and help you to stay on top of your emails.

Getting rid of as much clutter as possible will allow you to focus on the important messages. Information can drop off the first page and get missed because of the constant stream of junk, sales emails and newsletters that you don't even remember signing up for.

Instead of using smartphones to enhance to enhance our lives, we are letting them control our lives. We feel the need to immediately respond to every ding and tone, distracting us from living life.

This ebook is not about spending all day every day actioning emails to get down to 'Inbox Zero', it's about keeping your inbox as simple and as efficient as possible and getting clear on the information you are allowing into your life.

## CONTENTS

In this workbook, we'll go through;

- ♥ How I manage my emails - page 2
- ♥ How to declutter your emails - page 3
- ♥ How to organise your emails - page 4
- ♥ Stop the flow - page 5
- ♥ Email habits - page 6
- ♥ Email worksheets - page 8-11

# How I manage my emails...

As a small business owner, mum, and wife I do receive a lot of emails. Staying organised is crucial to me and my family, as I need to keep on top of important information.

Everyone has different ways that work to keep themselves organised, but these are the systems and habits that work for me.

## Email Accounts

Do you have separate email accounts for different purposes? I have the following email addresses...



### **Personal Private Email Address**

I use this email address for finances, schools, health, family and friends, and other important personal information. I never give it out to anyone, unless it's important or I completely trust them not to share it with anyone else. As a result, this email rarely receives any junk mail and has a better chance of not being hacked. I also know that this is where I can see all the important personal and family information that I need on a daily basis without having to sift through junk.



### **Work and Client Email Address**

This is for work and client related emails only.



### **Newsletter / Shopping / General Email Address**

This is not important and not checked very often - usually once a week. This is the address that I use for online shopping, signing up for newsletters and accessing free WIFI. It does receive a lot of emails so it needs to be decluttered regularly.

## Where I manage my emails

My master email management is done on my laptop using Microsoft Office, which I use to show all my different accounts in one place. Wherever possible I try to answer and organise emails from here. If I'm not at home and I need to check or reply to an email urgently I use the Outlook app on my iPhone or iPad.

## My email habits

I check my emails a few times a day - at the beginning of my working day, lunchtime, at the end of my working day and a quick check just before my bedtime routine starts.

At the end of each week, I'll spend 30 minutes or so actioning and filing any that I have not had time to during the week.

Even though I am on top of my emails most of the time, occasionally they do need a tidy up, (especially the junk/general email address). The following pages go through the systems that I use to declutter and organise my emails.

*Claire x*

# Declutter your emails

There are so many varying statistics out there that it is almost impossible to say how many emails people receive on average each day. One thing we do know for sure is that the number of emails received and sent on a daily basis is rising and will continue to do so whilst email marketing is such an important sales tool. Almost half the emails that we receive on a daily basis will be an offer, deal or newsletter.

If my emails every get a little out of control, I use the mass delete and file method detailed over the next few pages to declutter my inbox. As with everything you want to organise - you need to declutter first.

**Rather than having to think about and delete emails one by one, sort your emails into groups.**

You can use the following to collate your emails into groups;

## Using the 'Search By' function ...

For example, if you know that you probably have lots of emails from Amazon (trying to sell you something that you looked at a few weeks ago) - use the search function to type in 'Amazon' to bring up all of those emails.

Highlight all - Except one, and delete. For that last email, you need to open and then go to the bottom of the email and click 'unsubscribe', and then delete. It might take a few days, but hopefully, you should stop receiving these emails. Repeat this process for similar companies that you receive lots of emails from, but aren't important, such as eBay, Facebook, Twitter...

Another good search term is 'Unsubscribe', emails containing this word are usually generic newsletters or sales emails rather than anything that has been sent to you personally.

## Using the 'Sort By' function ...

### Sort by Sender

In most accounts, emails are automatically shown in date order, but with the remaining emails, sort them by sender. You will then be able to clearly see who else sends you the majority of your emails, and you can decide on whether you need to keep receiving or unsubscribe from any of these.

### Sort by Subject

If anything is clearly spam - add it straight to your spam/junk email folder - do not open it! Opening will flag to the sender that a human has responded and they are likely to send you more emails and add you to more lists. Hopefully, you should have virus software that will mark emails as spam and detect any virus's before they can do any harm. If you receive any fraudulent emails, report them to [www.actionfraud.police.uk/scam-emails](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/scam-emails).

Sorting by subject will show any conversation threads. You can delete all but the last email as the previous messages should all be shown in the latest email.

### Sort by Date

Delete any messages that relate to events that happened months ago., or any other really old messages that are no longer relevant in your life. Emails that may have seemed really important to keep when you first received them may not seem that way anymore.

### Sort by Anything with an Attachment

If you have emails that you were saving because of an attachment, download the attachment and save it to a different place if possible. Then delete the email.



# Organise your emails

Once you have decluttered your emails, using a couple or all or all of the 'search and sort by' decluttering methods, you should be left with a manageable amount of emails to action or file.

Use the 'Touch It Once' Rule as much as you can whilst emails are in your main inbox instead of opening and then going back to them to action later. Going through emails and delaying the decisions that you have to make will slow the process, and you be less productive. This is applicable to the emails that you have now and for managing your inbox on a regular basis.

With each email, choose one of these immediate actions;



DELETE,



QUICK REPLY or



FILE

## Delete

Delete emails that require no action and where no information is needed to be kept. Make sure you unsubscribe before deleting if you don't want to receive any more emails from the sender.

If you are sorting out your work emails, check with your employer's policies to make sure that you are able to delete as some employers prefer that all emails are kept.

## Quick Reply

If it takes less than 2 minutes or 5 sentences to reply, do it now and then delete or file the message.

If it will take a little more time or thought, you can either flag it or add it to a 'To Action' folder that you can go back to when you have time. Make sure that you go back and clear these as soon as you can.

## File

File emails where no response or action is required, but the email is important and is definitely needed to refer back to at a later date.

Most email accounts have the ability to create folders that you can quickly sort your emails into.

Here are some examples of folders that you could use... Online Shopping, Tax, Invoices and Bills to Pay, Newsletters, and Subscriptions, School, Social Media, Today,s/This Weeks Action Items, Family and Friends, Holidays and Travel, Work. Projects... Set up and use whatever folder systems work for you - there is no right or wrong way.

Do not use folders instead of actioning an email. If there is no valid reason for saving an email - don't.

Only file if you truly intend to reference that email again at a later date.

Keep your folders as simple as possible and make sure that you regularly declutter the folders that you have set up.

## Filters and Rules

You can create filters and auto-rules to automatically tag or file emails into a folder. Folders allow you to prioritise, file and automatically distribute less important information to folders that you can view when you are ready.

# Stop the flow

Now that you have decluttered and organised your emails, you need to keep them that way. Limit the amount of information coming into your inbox.

**Don't invite junk mail in by sharing your email address everywhere.** These days you need to give your email address away for everything and to everyone to get WIFI access, updates, and offers, but that doesn't mean that you have to allow them into your personal space forever. If you have one, use a junk email address, rather than your personal one.

## **Turn off social media email notifications.**

Do you really need to receive email notifications for every social media mention, tag or like? If you log into your apps on a regular basis, change your settings/preferences to stop receiving email notifications. I am happy to check my notifications whenever I log into my social media account, so don't feel that I need emails as well. If regular social media checks are important to you, they should be separate and fall outside of your email management.

## **Unsubscribe to as much as possible.**

We subscribe to all sorts of newsletters and subscriptions without realising. When you are signing up to become a VIP member or logging into a website, you are usually giving permission to receive emails from that company.

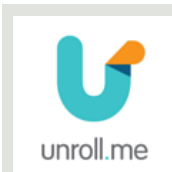
Only subscribe to newsletters that you are truly interested in, and intend on reading. Companies use bribes/marketing ploys to obtain your email address and access to your inbox, such as a free PDF, video or eBook. Sometimes you do receive some valuable content but once you have stopped receiving this and all you receive is sales pitches and offers, or the content is no longer enhancing or relevant to your life - unsubscribe. Every newsletter or marketing email should have the option to unsubscribe (usually at the bottom).

If you need to, use your general email address for these types of sign ups so that they don't clog up your personal inbox. The less tempted I am to click through and buy something I don't need the better.

It takes a minute or two to unsubscribe once, or 2 minutes every day or week to open, decide that you don't need the email (again) and delete (again). Sometimes these emails come through multiple times a day.

Be strict about who and what you allow into your inbox, and how long you let them in for. If you signed up to receive promotional emails for a planned project or purchase (and you are not planning on purchasing anything else from them in the near future) unsubscribe as soon as completed. If you change your mind or end up missing the emails, you can always resubscribe at a later date.

If you're not ready to completely unsubscribe see if it is possible to change the frequency in which you receive emails from that particular company.



There is an app called **UnRoll.Me** - which will create a daily digest of all of your newsletters and subscriptions that you want to continue receiving, and will unsubscribe you from the ones that you don't want to receive.

# Email Habits

- ✓ **Declutter and Keep it Clear**  
Your main inbox should only contain emails that need to be actioned or are unread. Aim to clear and reduce your inbox as much as possible on a daily basis so that your emails don't build up and you feel overwhelmed. If you need to also have a weekly tidy up session. Save any contact details and attachments that you need to keep elsewhere, rather than keeping the email. Clear past email threads and conversations.

- ✓ **Set Your Own Personal Rules**  
Mine are; no checking or responding to emails in the bedroom or bathroom, during my morning and bedtime routines or during meal or family time, I check and action my emails for 15 minutes at the beginning of my working day, just after lunch, at the end of my working day and just before my bedtime routine starts. You should take control of your emails and not them you. Turn off notifications so that the flow of your day is not disrupted and you can give your focus to the important things.

Set times to check and respond, and try and stick to this as much as possible. Decide how often do you really need to check your emails? and when the best time would be.

- ✓ **Unsubscribe**  
As soon as you receive an email from a company that you no longer wish to hear from - unsubscribe!

- ✓ **Take Your Time**  
Don't read or respond to difficult emails when you are tired, emotional or short of time. Take your time, think and breathe before pressing send.

- ✓ **Use Folders, Flags, Tags and/or Filters to Organise**  
(Different account providers call them different things)  
Set up simple folders for different types of emails so that you can easily find any information you need. Review any folders you have set up on a weekly basis.

- ✓ **Keep to the 'Touch it Once' Rule as much as possible**  
Read and action as soon as you can, don't delay and keep opening and closing emails and moving onto the next.

- ✓ **If you start to feel overwhelmed. take the time to declutter and organise again**  
Whenever you feel overwhelmed or your emails are getting too much. Take the time to go through the decluttering and organising process again to review why and address the issues.

# Email Worksheets

Now its your turn... print the following pages to help  
you to work through your own emails.



# Your Email Accounts

## Set yourself goals and time to focus

Allow yourself time to get your inbox under control. It's not a 5-minute job - but even 5 mins each day will make a difference. Try and set focused time each day or week, put it in your planner or calendar to remind you that you are working towards that goal. Give yourself a date of when you would like to have the decluttering and organisation completed.

## How many different email accounts do you have?

	Email Address	Purpose	Account Provider
1.)			
2.)			
3.)			
4.)			
5.)			

## Where do you manage and action your emails?

- ☐ Desktop/Laptop
- ☐ Smart Phone
- ☐ Tablet

Do you know your passwords and account setting for each email address? It's always helpful to keep a record of these in case you need you need to set up your account again or on another device.

NOTES

# Email Worksheets

Number of  
emails in inbox.

Print the following pages for each email account account that you wish to work through.



## Step 1 - Declutter

### ☐ Declutter your Junk/Spam Email Folder

First, check that everything in this folder is junk and that nothing important is getting in there. If there is, move it to your main inbox,

### ☐ Group and Declutter using the 'Search By' function

Use search words such as Amazon, eBay, Facebook or Unsubscribe to group large amounts of unimportant emails together. For each group, highlight all except one and delete. Use the last email to unsubscribe or change your notification settings and then delete.

Write down your search words...



### ☐ Group and Declutter using the 'Sort - By Sender' function

Change the order of your emails from date to 'From or By Sender'. You will be able to see who sends you large amounts of emails and how often they send them to you. Review, delete and unsubscribe if necessary.

Who do you receive most of your emails from?



### ☐ Group and Declutter using the 'Sort - By Subject' function

Highlight any conversation threads, delete all but the last one.

Notes



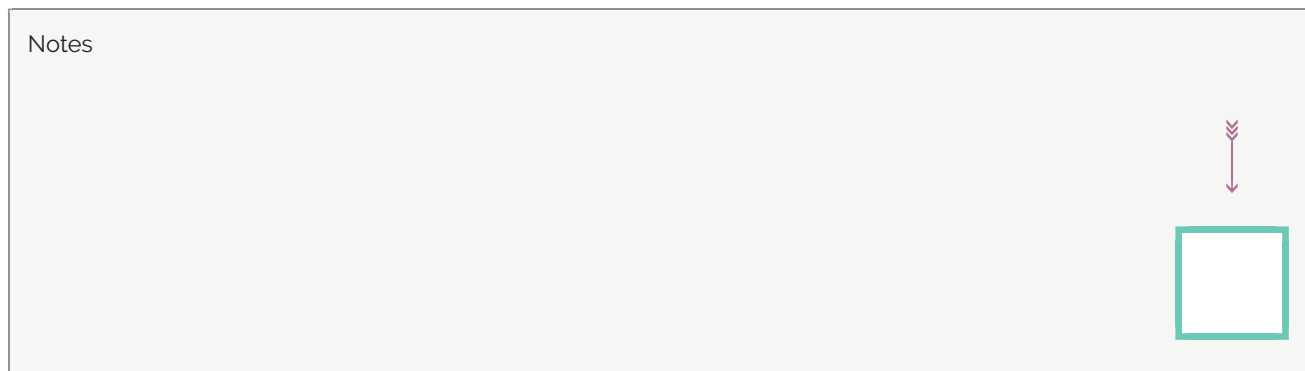
# Email Worksheets

## Step 1 - Declutter

### ☐ Group and Declutter using the 'Sort - By Date' function

Delete all old messages relating to previous events and those that are no longer relevant in your life.

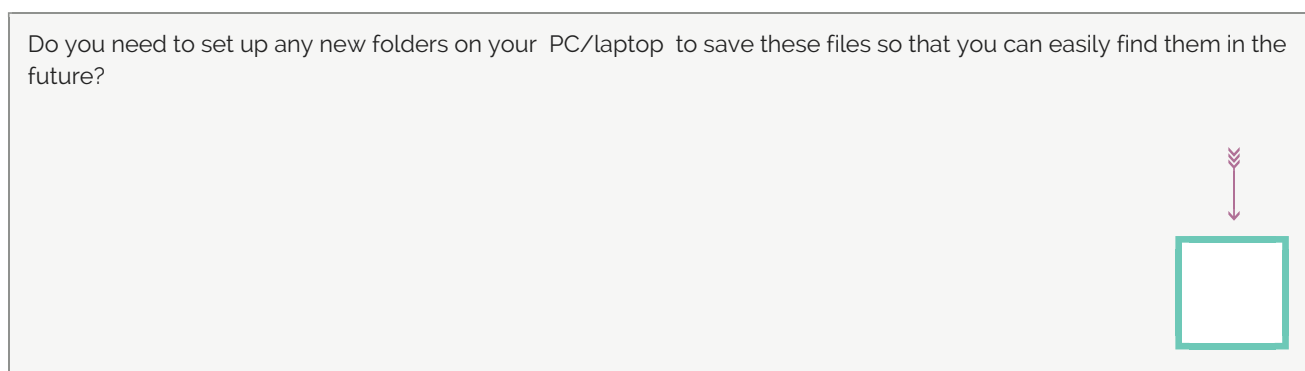
Notes



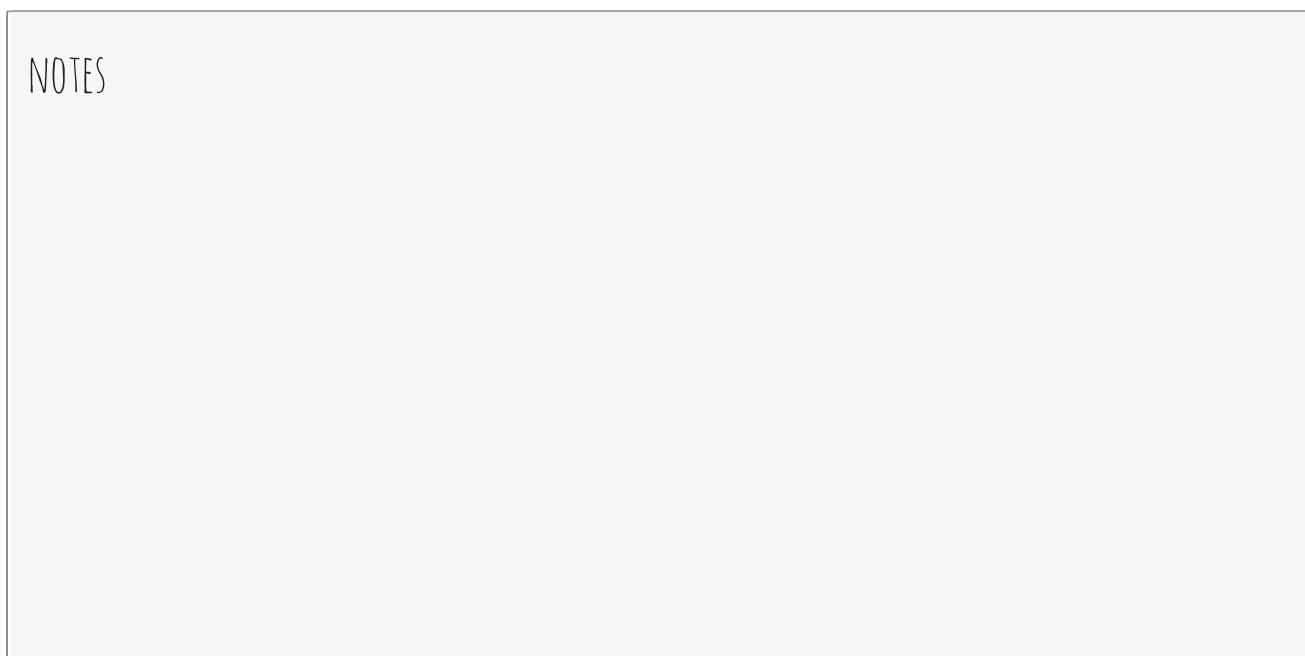
### ☐ Group and Declutter using the 'Sort - By Attachment' function

Can you save any of the files elsewhere?, if you can, delete the email.

Do you need to set up any new folders on your PC/laptop to save these files so that you can easily find them in the future?



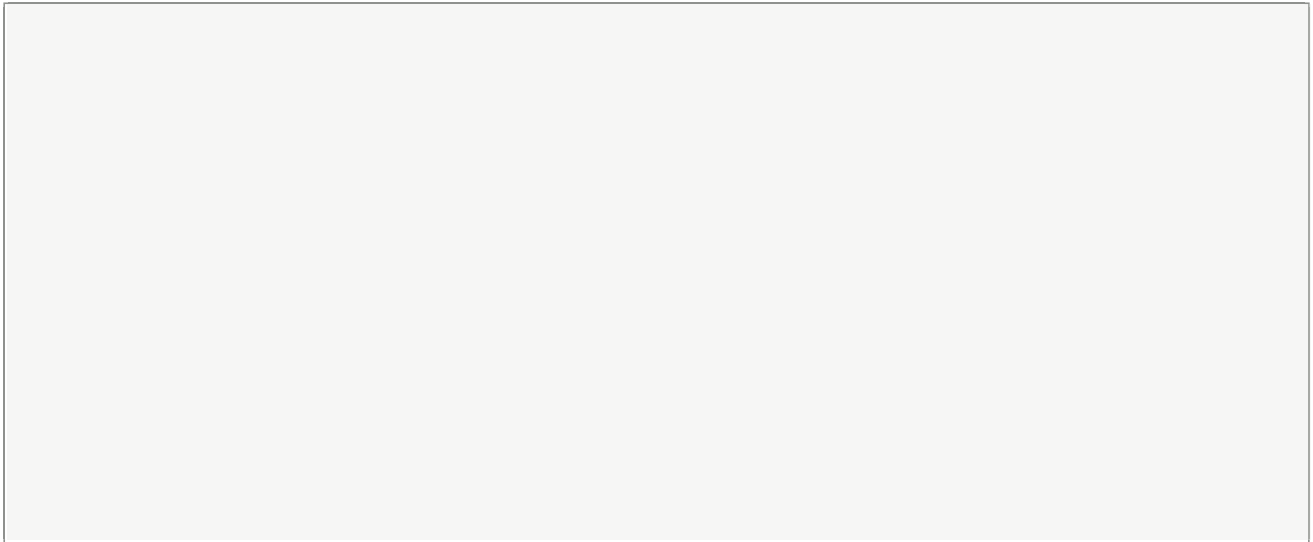
NOTES



# Email Worksheets

## Step 1 - Organise and Action

What folders could you set up in this inbox to organise important emails into.



Are there any filters that you could set up for these folders?

How often do you NEED to check your emails each day?

What would be the best time/s for you to check your that won't stop the flow of your day?