



## Get Organized: Workbag Wisdom



PHOTOGRAPH BY LISA SHIN. BAG FROM LEVINGER, CLASSES AND CARD CASE FROM SHE-WORKS. SEE OUR WEB'S GUIDE FOR RETAIL INFORMATION.

**Tote To-Do's:** Don't be seduced by a pretty tote that tips the scales even when it's empty. Start with a durable, lightweight bag.

- Look for lots of built-in compartments and at least one zippered pocket for valuables (like train tickets).
- Compartmentalize easy-to-lose toiletries and emergency items (like safety pins) into small, bright-colored mesh bags.
- Add accessories to keep order, like a business-card holder and a sunglasses case.

Have you weighed your workbag lately? If it's become a 40-pound wasteland of broken pens and crumpled papers, it's time to streamline. Follow organizer Ann Sullivan's ASAP approach to tame excess baggage—and quit carrying the weight of your work world on your shoulders.

### Assess

Make a list of the items you use every day (cell phone, iPod), what has to be transferred from work to home (paperwork, client files) and the tasks you do while commuting (reading, clipping coupons).

### Sort

Dump out your bag and group things into logical categories: personal items, electronics, work projects and home projects. Pare down the multiples—no one needs to carry around eight lipsticks. Then take out the things that don't belong at all, like a borrowed DVD.

### Activate

Create project folders and label them according to activities: to read, to-do/work, to-do/personal. As you fill them, be realistic about how much you can accomplish. Don't put the 100-page research report in your bag if you know you won't read it on your commute. "Our need to multitask makes us believe we have to carry everything with us," says Sullivan. "Stop the just-in-case thinking and pack smart."

### Preserve

At the end of each day, reassess what has to go home. Once a week, purge your bag of the things you no longer need, like extra change. Only carry things that help you balance home and work.

—Edited by Teresa Palagano