



Get Organized: File It, Don't Pile It



PHOTOGRAPH BY WENDELL T. WEBBER; STYLING BY HOUSE STYLE

Cure File Phobia: Choose a desktop file holder that's streamlined but offers easy access. It should be pretty (to keep you motivated) but practical (so you can retrieve things easily). ● Don't stick file labels left, right and center. It's visually chaotic, and each time you add or delete a file your system goes out of kilter. Instead, keep all tabs aligned to one side. ● Color-coordinate each category: red for Act, blue for Contact, purple for Pay and yellow for Delegate.

Are you constantly searching for misplaced papers that were "here just a minute ago"? Organizer Ann Sullivan's ASAP desktop system will help you find important folders in a flash. And the file holder from www.moma-store.org will also maintain order.

Assess

Pick a pile, any pile, and dive in. Separate out all the bulky items like magazines, newspapers and catalogs, and store in magazine racks. Put computer discs in CD holders and business cards in your phone index. Nothing but papers should be left in your pile.

Sort

Throw out useless documents. Create an "Act" pile for items that require a response from you—such as manuscripts to review. Make a "Delegate" pile of items to pass on to an assistant or coworker. Make a "Reference" pile of materials that you want to hold on to but that don't require immediate action, such as interesting news clippings.

Activate

Create a desktop filing system to hold everything from the Act and Delegate piles. (File items from the Reference pile in drawers.) Your file box will have four big folders: **Act** (for ongoing projects like reports to write); **Contact** (for calls you need to make); **Pay** (for bills and invoices); and **Delegate** (inside this folder, have a file for each person or department you work with).

Preserve

Each day, file your papers. Once a week, distribute the contents of the Delegate folders. Each month, flip through all files to be sure nothing's been overlooked.

—Edited by Teresa Palagano