

## THE MAIL CENTER

Did you know that we receive the \*same amount of mail in two days that our parents received in two weeks and our grandparents in two months or possibly even two years? *\*don't know exactly where this stat came from but sounds legit to me!*

First, take a deep breath, look at your mail pile and holler and I mean HOLLAH a good "You don't control me. I control you!" This project may just change your life... ok that's going a bit far, but there is a reason this is your first H...home project. I believe that once you get the mail under control with a system that works for you, you can maintain the incoming paper a lot easier. So get to it girlfriend. Tackle this one w/a little gusto!

approx. time for initial project: 1 hour +shopping  
maintain: 5 minutes/day

You'll need:

- a location
- organizing products: drawer unit, file box, binder etc. \*see options below
- a couple of plastic bins or cute boxes with lids
- shredder
- recycling bin
- trash can
- clipboard
- basket or magazine file box

### PLAN

#### 1. CREATE A PLACE FOR INCOMING MAIL.

Pick a spot... pick the best spot. Consider these items.

1. *What door do you enter with the mail?*
2. *Is there room, enough room?*
3. *Is the spot somewhat hidden from public view?*

I like to use my office/den which is located just off the front door + near the laundry room/garage door entrance. If you have one of those cute little kitchen desk cubbies I'd consider this spot.

#### 2. T.A.K.E. CONTROL

I use the acronym T.A.K.E. for setting up and maintaining the mail. I'll walk you through each step and show you how to create your own Mail Center based on your personal organizing style!

T... Toss [toss.recycle.shred]

A... Act [pay.read.call.decide.enter] **This is the heart of this system.**

K... Keep [file.put-away]

E... Edit [ remove yourself from the mailing list]



## **T... Toss [toss.recycle.shred]**

Place a trash can, shredder, + recycling bin within arms reach. If you have a shredder that adjusts sizes you may want to consider placing it on top of a basket and have it serve double duty as the recycling bin.

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## **A... Act [pay.read.call.decide.enter]**

This is the best part!!!! This section is about the mail you need to ACT on. First read the ACT categories then choose your custom solution based on your personal organizing style. You'll choose from 1. PILER 2. FILER 3. BINDER

**PAY** This is where bills land. Keep a pen, extra checkbook, couple of envelopes + stamps in this area.

**EVENTS** Invites and interesting brochures.

**FILE** The items I'm too lazy to file immediately.

**RECEIPTS + COUPONS** Because gosh darn it I may just use that coupon. I also keep short term receipts here- b-day presents, online purchases. Gift cards as well.

**SUPPLIES** My desk doesn't have drawers so my pens, post-its, paperclips etc are in here.

**HUSBAND** The items that my husband needs to look at or keep stashed.

Here are some other paper categories you may have...

**DECIDE** Things I need to think about and don't know where else to put them!

**SCHOOL** The calendar, the passwords, the contact info etc. [But I prefer keeping it all in a peechee or file]

**PROJECTS** Are you working on something and want to quickly tuck it away....

**DREAM** ooh... for those catalog pages you tore out because you think may just order that item!

**What's your Organizing Style...** are you a FILER, PILER OR BINDER kind of girl? I've tried all 3 styles and find "organized" piling works the best for me

### **SYSTEM FOR "THE PILER"**

You are a piler if you need to 'see' an item or you tend to forget about it.

Use a clipboard to catch all the items you need to add to your to-do list. I consider it my organized pile. For example... when I receive an invite and need to jot the date in my planner, I place it on my clipboard first then move it to the EVENTS file .



This is my signature piece ;) I LOVE this thing! I prefer the 6 drawer-WIDE letter chest. It also comes in a 3 drawer version. The drawers come out and they are shallow.

This makes it easy for me to clear them out every so often and the wide drawer version makes it easy to see everything in the drawer. When the



drawer is long + narrow it messes with me... meaning I lose things in the back and it feels more like a file cabinet to me. It sits on top of my desk. [www.STORABLES.com](http://www.STORABLES.com) 14.5" L x 11.5" W x 14.25" H 6 drawer wide black letter chest \$49.95 + \$10shipping.

**SHE template:** Labels for the drawers: [Download mail center action labels for drawers.doc](#) your label size may vary but this will give you a great start!

### SYSTEM FOR "THE FILER"

Take a moment to consider if you truly are a filer... when I file something it tends to stay in the file for a good long time. The purpose of the MAIL CENTER is to take ACTION on the items you are keeping.

The desktop file box is great if you are a FILER... your tabs would be created from the above list + customized for your use.

Another option is a wall file pocket system. Or a step up file holder for the desktop or mounted on a wall.

### SYSTEM FOR "THE BINDER"

You can simply recreate the T.A.K.E. system using a binder. The drawback is that it fills up pretty quickly and you'll need to edit it more often. I use the same ACT labels listed above for the tabs and like the 8 pocket tabbed binder dividers from an office supply store.

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### K... Keep [file.put-away]

Box up bank statements, investment communications and big packets of stuff you need to keep— don't deal with a file folders because they will get clogged quickly. You can stack 'em or line 'em up.

Mine are labeled:

- BANK
- FINANCE
- TAXES

Add a basket or magazine file box for catalogs + magazines. Try standing these up as opposed to stacking them... You'll be able to flip through them much more quickly.

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### E... Edit [remove yourself from the mailing list]

#### Say "No" to Junk Mail

"An average of 675 pieces of junk mail end up in every mailbox each year – a whopping total of 4 million tons nationwide

I love getting a catalog or two, but those all credit offers have got to go... go away that is. Here's some quick info that will put you back in control.



The info is from **Metro** in Portland, Oregon. Thanks Metro... love my little green corner of the world~

Drop the ValPak coupons! You'll need your envelope to input the correct info.  
<http://www.coxtarget.com/mailexpression/s/DisplayMailSuppressionForm>

Call the Credit Bureaus  
to opt out... [www.optoutprescreen.com](http://www.optoutprescreen.com) Contact them again in 2 years.

Remove your name from the Direct Marketing Association Mailing lists:  
<https://www.dmchoice.org/MPS/proto1.php>

Reduce the amount of business junk mail, this is a great resource... because time is money and it's frustrating + expensive to manage junk mail! <http://www.metrokc.gov/dnpr/swd/hwpc/bizjunkmail.htm>

Of course there are a million and one things you can do to reduce the influx, but commit to do something instead of waiting around to do it all. Then go smile at a tree and breathe in some fresh air :)

## **MAINTAINING YOUR SYSTEM**

It will only T.A.K.E. you 2 minutes! My mail arrives in a locked box across the way... so I let it accumulate for a couple of days then gather it up and follow the T.A.K.E. method to sort + file. One little trick I do is sort my mail as I'm walking back to my house. I can drop the recycling off in the garage before even entering the house and then place the shred on top of the shredder.

Remember it only takes 2 minutes a day!

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