

HOW TO ORGANIZE

Your Computer Files

a simple system you can actually maintain.

Your computer should help you find things - not become another place where clutter hides. The goal is not a perfect filing system. It is a predictable one.

1

START WITH FIVE CORE FOLDERS

Keep the top level boring and obvious. Most personal files can live inside a small set of categories:

01_ADMIN	forms, IDs, insurance, household records
02_MONEY	taxes, receipts, banking, major purchases
03_WORK	jobs, clients, projects, professional files
04_PERSONAL	health, travel, hobbies, family, learning
05_ARCHIVE	finished or inactive material you still need

Rule: if you need more than a few seconds to decide where something goes, the system is too complicated.

Make every file easy to find

2

USE THE SAME STRUCTURE INSIDE FOLDERS

Inside a category, organize by project, topic, or year - whichever you are most likely to remember later. Avoid creating folders for every tiny detail.

EXAMPLE: 03_WORK

- Current Projects
 - ■■■ Project Alpha
 - ■■■ Project Beta
- Career
- Archive

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NAME FILES SO THEY SORT THEMSELVES

A good filename tells you what the file is without opening it. Put the most useful information first and use one naming pattern consistently.

DATES

2026-09-04_budget-review.pdf

VERSIONS

resume_marketing_v03.docx

RECEIPTS

2026-08-18_ikea_desk_249.pdf

PROJECTS

kitchen-reno_contract_signed.pdf

4

CREATE ONE TEMPORARY LANDING ZONE

Downloads and your desktop are temporary surfaces, not permanent storage. Give yourself one INBOX folder for files you have not sorted yet. Empty it on a schedule instead of organizing every file the second it arrives.

00_INBOX

sort weekly -> file / delete / archive

Keep it organized

without turning it into a project

5

DO A 10-MINUTE WEEKLY FILE RESET

A small reset prevents a giant cleanup later. Set a timer and stop when it ends.

☐

Clear the desktop

☐

Sort the Downloads folder

☐

Empty 00_INBOX

☐

Rename mystery files

☐

Delete duplicates and obvious junk

☐

Move finished projects to Archive

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KNOW WHAT NOT TO ORGANIZE

Not every file deserves a folder. Delete things you can easily download again, outdated drafts you will never need, duplicate screenshots, installers, and random exports. Fewer files make every system easier.

The 3-question filing rule

1. Will I need this again?
2. Where would I look for it first?
3. Can I name it so future-me understands it?

Your computer does not need to be perfectly organized.

It just needs to be predictable.

Start small: create the five core folders, clear your desktop, and stop there for today.