

1

Find an organizational system that works for you. Some people prefer a detailed folder system based on topic, while others prefer a simplified system based on what response the email needs. Take time to experiment and figure out what works best for you.

EXAMPLE 1: Create folders or [Gmail labels](#) based on topic.



EXAMPLE 2: Create folders or [Gmail labels](#) based on email status and next steps.

Inbox: Emails requiring response (e.g., responding to an instructor's question about an assignment).

To-Do: Emails associated with tasks to complete (e.g., register for summer term).

Follow-Up: Emails delegating action to another person or only relevant at a future date (e.g., registration for fall opens in 1 week).

When Time: Emails which don't require response but have content to review when time permits (e.g., research article of interest).

2

Use filters. Once you set a filter, it automatically carries out the organizational task – like moving all Canvas notifications all Canvas notifications to a "Canvas" folder. Some email clients call this "Rules". In Gmail, you can create filters using the function in the search's window's menu options.



3

Mark emails as read/unread. An open box, envelope, or bullet point indicates an email has been read. Only mark email as "read" if you have read it and decided what folder to move it to or what action is required. In Gmail, you can right click on a message to mark the email as read or unread. You can also access this function through each email's more options area, illustrated by three dots:



4

Use the task tool, and then move emails out of the inbox. Flagging an email as a task creates an action item in your tasks list. In Gmail, you can add tasks to your to-do-list or create calendar entries. The task panel in the right sidebar will then contain the task with a link to the original email. Tip: If you can complete the task/response in under 2 minutes, do so immediately to limit your task list.



5

Set specific times to read and respond to emails just like you would for other important tasks. It may help to set up 2-3 short time blocks (e.g., 15-30 min) throughout the day to set an additional time weekly to delete/archive old email. If possible, avoid checking emails constantly, as this can increase stress.

TO DO TUESDAY:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 8:30 - 8:45 AM: Check email	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM: walk	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:45 - 4:00 PM: BIO 21 work
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 9:00 - 10:50 AM: ENGR 100W	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 12:00 - 12:30 PM: Lunch	<input type="checkbox"/> 4:30 - 5:00 PM: Check email
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1:15 to 1:30 PM: Check email	

6

When you need to focus on other activities, turn off email notifications to reduce distractions. This is less a strategy about managing your email and more a strategy about not letting your email manage you. In addition to shutting off notifications, you can also close-out your email client in order to focus your full attention on the task at hand. Then, when you are finished with your activity, remember to turn email notifications back on!

7

Plan to incorporate email into your other time management tools. For example, you might include email time on your weekly calendar or flag emails and note the follow-up tasks in your weekly-to-do-list.

