

GOOD EMAIL HYGIENE

1

Send fewer and better messages.

You'll get fewer back in return.

Make messages brief, simple, and orderly. Avoid the temptation to send a reply the instant something pops into your inbox. Take the time and care to craft thoughtful, well-timed messages. That due diligence will save everyone much more time later.

2

Should your email be a conversation?

Some things are best communicated face to face.

Before sending an email, ask yourself if you shouldn't schedule a meeting or phone call with the recipient(s) instead. If you find yourself struggling to clearly communicate all the relevant information in text, that's a signal it's better to talk it out.

3

Stop sending drafts and reminders.

Your emails should be valuable to the recipient.

Don't send "first drafts" of emails without giving them a simple proofread first. That way you won't have to send a clarifying follow-up message later. And if you're sending a message as a reminder for yourself—don't. Set the reminder on your calendar.

4

Be mindful of who you include.

Only send the most relevant messages.

It may seem like it goes without saying, but only copy people who need to be CC'd, and do not Reply All unless everyone needs to see the reply. Use red flags sparingly and with purpose. Otherwise, people may start to ignore all your emails.

5

Make subject lines smart.

Context is everything.

If the subject of the conversation changes from the original email, change the subject line and create a separate thread. Establish a simple folder system for yourself based on context, or how you intend to use certain emails later.

6

Establish daily time blocks for email.

Review and respond in batches.

Rather than dealing with emails as they come in throughout the day, dedicate specific blocks of time to review and respond. Manage people's expectations by telling them about this practice—let them know when they should expect responses from you.

