



# De-clutter Your Medical Practice Office: 3 Tips

November 14, 2014 | Healthcare Careers, Managers Administrators, Operations

By [Jeff Davidson](#)

Let's face it: We all tend to over-collect. And those in busy and hectic office environments, such as in a typical medical practice, could be even more likely to fall into the clutter trap.

Accumulating too many items can lead to disorganization and stress. To take control, eliminate at the top whatever clogs your system and interferes with your effectiveness.

Here are three principles to get better organized in your office, and/or your medical practice:

**1. Break down your horizontal piles.** You cannot manage a horizontal pile; indeed, no one can efficiently negotiate this spatial arrangement. Human beings most effectively organize printed information vertically, either in a filing cabinet with all labeled tabs facing upward, or in a vertical divider with tabs facing outward.

Horizontal piles, such as those consisting of paperwork, mail, and other items, cannot be a final resting place for these items because you always have to do something else with them. To know in seconds whether or not someone is efficient, visit his office and observe whether he maintains horizontal piles.

**2. Get rid of what you don't need.** Devise a list of your priorities and goals, then, wade through each of your files and ask yourself four questions:

- Have I used this information in the last year?
- Are there any consequences of not retaining it?
- Does it support me, my family, my practice, my community, etc?
- Is the information or item irreplaceable?

Feel free to retain the item(s) if you answer yes to any of the above questions. Nevertheless, in light of what you now know, your priorities, and the surrounding disorganization, consider whether retention is warranted. Often the answer is "toss it."

**3. Master the art of creative trashing.** What else that barely exceeds the criteria for retention can you toss right now? Which medical journals can you give away? What information should be given to a different member of your practice?

Don't just hold on to items because you think you should. Determine who would benefit more from the items. It's a lot easier to let go of items when you know they will benefit others.