

Email Best Practices



Top Tips to Make Peace with Your Inbox

Email can be a major driver of stress and overwhelm. We can each take steps to improve our own electronic communication etiquette to make work more pleasant for ourselves and our colleagues.

See below for top tips from the Practitioner Wellness Committee to maximize your productivity and work-life integration.



DO: think before you send

1. Can it be a phone call instead?
2. Who needs to be included?
3. What's the take away message?

DON'T: reply all, unless truly necessary



Responses should be limited to those who need to know the information being conveyed to respect others time and inbox capacity.



DO: have reasonable expectations for response time

The expectation of immediate response prevents us from having necessary time for projects that require deep thought and time to recharge. See recommendations below:

Emergent matters: Require same day response. We recommend a phone call, text or in person conversation whenever possible.

Urgent matters: Require a response within 2 business days. We recommend marking those with the "urgent" flag.

Routine matters: The majority of communication falls into this category. We recommend allowing 5 business days for responses to most emails, unless another timeline is specified.



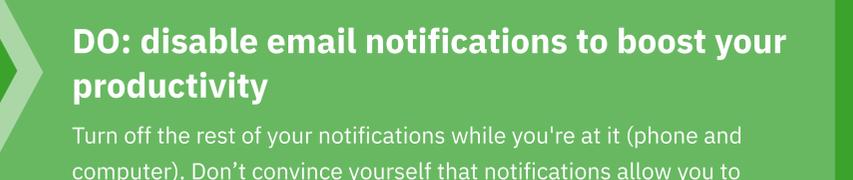
DO: block time for focused work

Single tasking—focusing on one task at a time—can make you up to 80% more productive than splitting your attention across multiple tasks.



DON'T: check your email first thing in the morning

Nothing is more stressful and more disruptive than checking your email right when you wake up, and starting your day with multiple fires.



DO: disable email notifications to boost your productivity

Turn off the rest of your notifications while you're at it (phone and computer). Don't convince yourself that notifications allow you to keep track of things. Remember, it takes around 23 minutes to refocus after an interruption.



DON'T: forward sensitive information

Avoid forwarding without permission from the original sender. At minimum, review the content to avoid sending any sensitive information.



DO: have email boundaries

Medical staff are not required to check their email outside of normal business hours or on the weekends. Some medical staff work non-traditional hours (nights or weekends). It is reasonable for them to send emails during these times, but a response from others at that time is not expected.

DON'T: use email for this stuff



- Discussing delicate topics
- Controversial issues
- Discussing details of patient cases
- Reprimanding someone's behavior
- Decision making
- Complex planning
- Other activities that benefit from human contact

Best way to receive fewer emails?

Send fewer emails. The more emails you send, the more emails you receive. Not every email needs a response.

Parting Wisdom

"Email is where **other people's priorities live**. It's someone else's to-do list. Instead, **work on your most important task.**"

-Dan Silvestre