

5 Most Common Filing Mistakes . . . liz jenkins of a **fresh space** . . . [www.afreshspace.com](http://www.afreshspace.com)

### 1. Overstuffing the file drawer . . .

Filling the filing cabinet so full that you risk loss of limb when attempting to file just one more paper is the number one reason people don't like to file. With good reason, too.

Purge your filing cabinets regularly, and archive what you don't need at hand. This means to place older papers that you don't need regularly in plastic or bankers boxes and storing them elsewhere.

### 2. Mix and match files, labels and colors . . .

Keep your colors consistent, place labels in straight lines and use manila colored interior folders no matter what the color of the hanging folder. Being creative and using color can be good but can also create havoc when trying to retrieve documents. Use one color for each major category with no more than 4 colors per drawer (2 is better). Place all tabs in a straight line for each major category, and keep the interior folders in a straight line as well.

### 3. Handwriting your labels . . .

Unless your handwriting came from the Palmer method or looks like this print, don't do it. Use a label maker with black print on white tape. For every label. Your eyes will thank you.

### 4. Too many categories . . .

Keep the categories straightforward and simple. You don't need to name each file with the name of the company – cell phone, or mortgage works just as well in case you switch services or refinance. If you save receipts, you can either save by month, or by category. Not both, and certainly not but every single, possible option of group you may have.

### 5. Filing everything . . .

Be selective – and mindful of what you are filing. Do you REALLY need this paper? Don't save the envelopes and all of the extra stuff sent with your bills, and don't print every email or interesting article you read. Some papers you really do need to hold on to, such as tax documents or mortgage papers but do you really need 10 year old electric bills? Or the request for a donation that you may or may not do? Don't worry – they'll send you another one.