

# 3 Steps to Empty Your Inbox



## 1 Create a new inbox subfolder

- Call it the Backlog folder
- If you have lots of sub-folders, place an asterisk (\*) in front of the word Backlog so that it appears immediately below the Inbox folder.

This is a process that has been successfully used by hundreds of past Taming the Email Tiger workshop participants to get their in-box empty right now and then use the 4D Methodology to keep it that way into the future.



## 2 Empty the Inbox

- Select all messages in your In-box (highlight any message and then click CTRL+A).
- Drag n' drop the highlighted messages into the new Backlog folder (ta-da, instant empty in-box!)

*Thanks for downloading this 'cheat sheet'. I sure hope it helps you get your inbox back under control.*

*Let me know if I can help any further – a quick chat on the phone or send me an email.*

*All the best,*

*Stewart*



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## 3 Process the backlog folder

- **Schedule time:** This is probably the most important step in getting control of your backlog. It will take some time to work through the backlog, so the first step is schedule a block of time(s) into your calendar. There's often no need to complete this task in one sitting so set blocks of 15-20 minutes at a time. This way you'll stay highly focused on simply making a decision about each email as quickly as possible. It's a powerful time management strategy – reduce time to increase focus!
- **Run rules:** If you have created any rules, run these first so that they clear out as many emails as possible based on your previous decisions (ie: rules). If you haven't got one, you can [set up a 'CC Rule'](#) so that it moves these messages to a separate folder you can review later (at a scheduled block of time set aside just for reading), so you can keep up to date with background details.
- **Delete in batches:** Rather than look at one message at a time, start by focusing on the bigger batches that you can process to quickly reduce your Backlog.
- Sort the Backlog folder by the Subject line. Delete or file any with subjects that you may have already dealt with. Even if there are a number of messages in a conversation thread, you can usually delete all but the most recent one (which should contain the entire trail of conversation).
- Sort by the Sender column and once again delete or file in batches
- Sort by Received date column and delete or file those that may have become obsolete because of their age.
- **Use the 4D method** for each of the remaining messages.