



ANGEL'S FRIENDLY COACHING

ORGANIZE YOUR BILL PAYING TO AVOID STRESS AND WORRY

ANGELIQUE MERCURIO

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ORGANIZE YOUR BILL PAYING TO AVOID STRESS AND WORRY

Bills can create headaches and cause stress for all of us. They all seem to come due at the same time, and there never seems to be enough money to make ends meet. Factor in the time involves writing checks, addressing envelopes, and hunting down postage stamps, and it's a chore many of us would gladly relinquish. But with some simple planning and organization, it's a task that can become easier and less stressful.

The first step is to establish a central location in your home. Make sure all the tools you need are in the same location: an inbox or folder to store incoming bills, pens, postage stamps, envelopes, your checkbook, a calculator, and your computer if you use financial software or online banking services. Then when the time comes to sit down and pay the bills, you're not left hunting and searching for that lost light bill.

Develop a list of your bills that includes the type, the average amount, how you're billed (online, through the mail, or by automatic deduction from your bank account), and the due date. If your utility bill tends to stay the same from month to month, notate that on your list so you can easily determine how much to budget. File this list with your other tools.

During this process, you might have discovered that your due dates are scattered all over the calendar, which can make paying bills in a timely fashion difficult at best. Contact the companies and see if they'd be willing to change your due date to more closely adhere to your payment schedule and to more closely coincide with the due dates of other bills.

Online bill paying is a great way to not only save money on postage. If you choose to be billed electronically, it can reduce the amount of mail you receive and have to file. Since most payments post to your account quicker than a bill paid traditionally, it also allows you to correct a bill-paying mistake quicker and avoid problems as a result. Most banks offer online bill-paying services, and many companies have bill-paying options online.

It's probably a good idea to consider paying bills twice a month, or each time you receive your paycheck. Scheduling bill paying as a regular task will make it easier to deal with and will decrease the chances of missed or late bills.

