

Limiting How Often You Check Email

Hello Sezzers,

To those of you who limit your e-mail checking to a few times a day, what times have you found worked for you - either number of times you check or what time you check.

I am going to be trying this for the next two weeks while I get through a bunch of paperwork.

I tell clients I check email every few hours. This is intentionally vague. I see it as training or defining expectations that no response will be instantaneous. Sometimes I tell them that clients I am meeting with take priority, then deadlines, then email and phone messages.

My concern is that if I tell them, for example, that I check email messages at 10 am and 2 pm, they will have an expectation of a response shortly after that. I try to under promise and over deliver on the issue, but don't make specific promises.

Real world I look at emails every few hours when I have something else pressing and I am in the office. Other days, like today, I am out of office all day and come by after hours to check messages.

Darrell G. Stewart. Texas

Since I get email notifications on my phone, I cannot avoid reading emails immediately. Knowing I have an email, and not reading it is not possible.

I wish I could set my email app to only check emails at specific times during the day. In practice, I tell all of my client that an email is treated like a voicemail. All will be returned usually within one business day.

Brian C. Hagner, Wisconsin

You can set how often your email is pulled. Perhaps that is a mechanism to achieve some space.

Darrell G. Stewart

When you say you get email notifications on your phone, do you mean your phone pings you when an email comes in? That's certainly not required for most email clients on either the iPhone or Android phones. My iPhone is set to pull messages every half hour, and it shows a badge with the number of unopened items I have, but it does "ding" or otherwise alert me when messages come in. Given that I often get over 100 emails a day, I doubt I'd get anything done besides answering email if I allowed sound notifications.

Kevin W. Grierson, Virginia

If your email is based through Gmail, you can have your inbox paused and thus it is turned "off" and won't send any notices or updates until you turn it back on.

Erin M. Schmidt, Ohio

My name is John and I'm an email addict I started innocently. I got my first email account JDavidso.WBST I accessed once a day at lunch on an Alto running Laurel, It was nice no spam no managers just recipes and jokes. Paradise eventually the connected that email to XNS email Then I was JAD:ROCH0846:Xerox at one point I was getting 200 emails a day Then management found out and they started using it but it was only on my office workstation so if I was out on assignment or went home no email. Now I get alerted to the office email on my phone. Though I don't try to answer it.

My plan isn't not reading email but not answering email right off, otherwise the first line of my response would be:

Listen Mush for Brains

which general is not appropriate at this juncture.

John Davidson, Pennsylvania

I turned off notifications for my business e-mail on my phone within days of opening my practice. When I'm working (whether at home or in the office) I generally just leave the e-mail inbox open in one tab and give it a quick look when something comes in. If it's a non-emergency, I just go back to what I was working on. Honestly, I should probably stop even doing that. I find checking thoroughly/responding to what needs to be responded to at the start of the work day and the end of the work day (whenever that may be for you) is a good practice. I don't see how someone could leave business e-mail notifications on 24/7 and not eventually be driven completely insane. I do have an e-mail account tied to my phone that's specifically for e-service when e-filings come in, because I kinda want to know when the clock starts on those right away, and that's bad enough.

IMO compartmentalization is necessary to avoid burn out (i.e., When it's "Family Time" or "Relax Time" or "Dinner Time" then all the devices are shut off and far away from me. Only exception would be if there is some huge trial or other major, non-routine event looming). Even though I'm only in my early 30's I kind of wish we could return to the pre-internet days and doing things over letters, where you'd be thrilled to get a response back within the week.

Bryce Davis, Florida

I receive emails on my phone only when I want to. I do not get sound notifications because I choose not to. I think it's called pull versus push. The same applies to my desktop computer, since I use only webmail and all of my email addresses. When I'm ready to read or even just look at the headers of emails, I look at the open email tabs. If I feel I have time to read, I will open just the emails that I want to read at that time. The rest can wait. I do not necessarily answer any immediately. I think I am the mistress of my email domains. :-)

Miriam Jacobson, Pennsylvania

When I said I get notifications on my phone every time I get an email, it is not a sound or vibration notification. But it shows up on the lock screen if I check the time on the phone, or if I am using the phone, the email app has a visual notification showing the number of unread messages.

I have my phone email app set up as an IMAP account with my work email. I will look into ways to change how often it pulls emails. Or how to turn it off in the evenings and weekends.

Brian C. Hagner

When you limit your checking, you limit the effectiveness - not so much for solos but in larger environments as you increase the likelihood you are not aware of something that others are - like an emergency for a client. Rather than limit the times you check email, you might want to look at my system - which allows you to check email whenever you want, but only to process email vs. work in it. Here's a link:

<https://tinyurl.com/DAFTSez>

Andrea Cannavina, nope notta lawyer

From the folks at Attorney@Work: "Running the day productively"

<https://www.attorneyatwork.com/running-the-day-productively/>

Hope this helps!

Dave Rakowski, Pennsylvania

For the first time this week I got a notice on my I Phone about how much screen time I experienced last week.

Roger Rosen, California

The Court clerk today required the entire court room of litigants and attorneys to shut down all cell phones for the entire morning because of the presidential text.

What's amazing is that it resulted in several delays in court because litigants could not check their calendars for availability for additional court dates.

Also, sitting in court for hours without a cell phone was apparently very boring for my client. My client said next time he will bring a book. :)

Amanda L. Gordon, California
