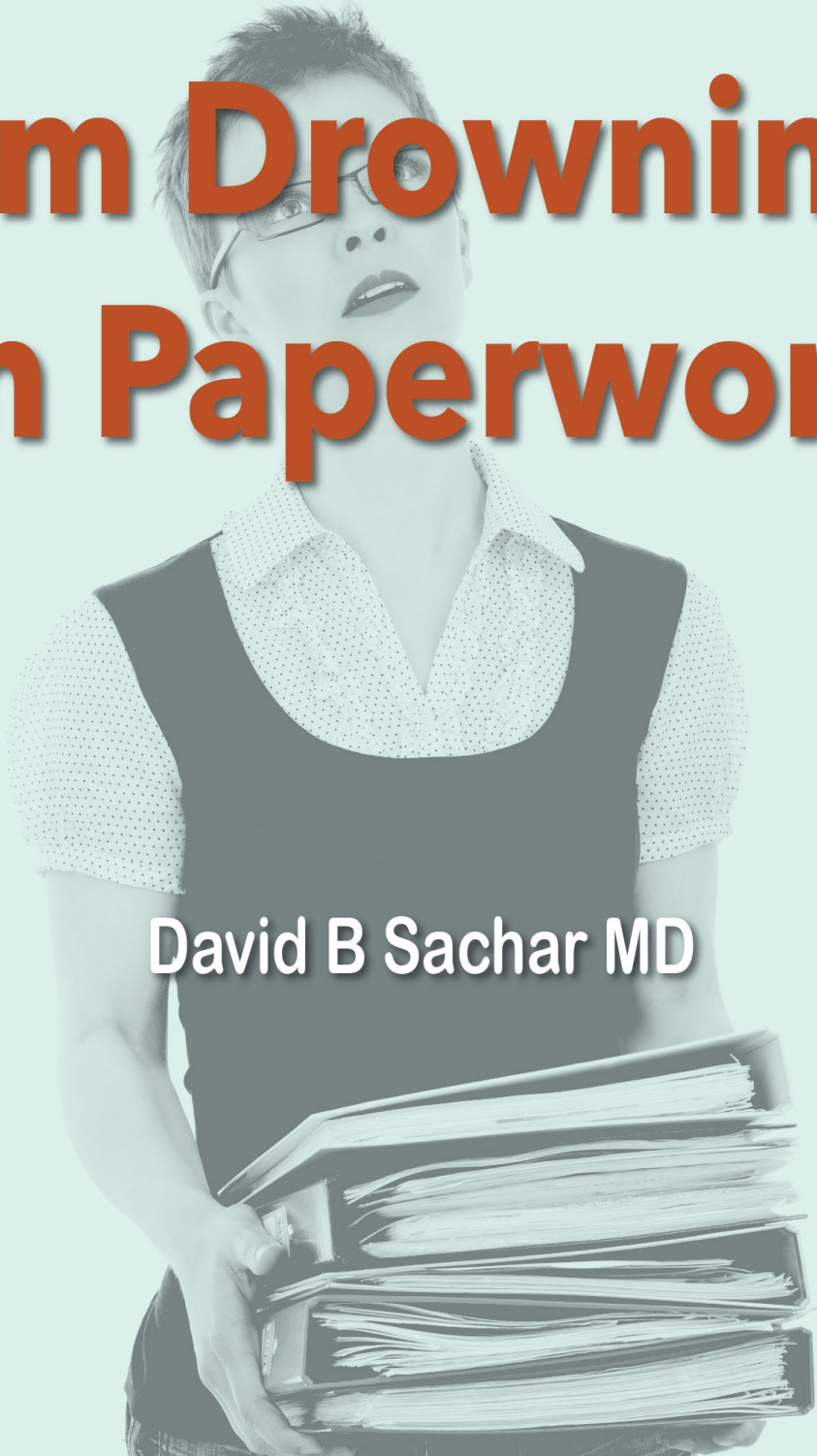# I'm Drowning in Paperwork

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"I'M DROWNING IN PAPERWORK"

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"I'M DROWNING IN PAPERWORK"

You don't have to be an ADHD person to suffer from the syndrome of a desk buried under intimidating piles of paper, but it's sure a lot worse for us.

Simple Rule #1:

Your desktop is a tarmac, not a hangar.

The top of your desk is not designed or intended for long-term storage. File drawers are meant for that purpose, although wastepaper baskets and shredders are often preferable.

The point is that your desktop is only a tarmac—meant for papers and things to touch down briefly and then take off again for final destinations.

Simple Rule #2:

Touch each item only once if it can be filed away.

The ideal itinerary for each incoming item is a non-stop flight. If it's destined for a file, as with insurance papers, bank statements, appliance guarantees, or responses to your Christmas cards, then put it straight into its final resting place as soon as it arrives, with no stopovers on your desktop.

Simple Rule #3.

If you don't have a drawer with files for each category of document, make one.

But if it an item requires action before it can be filed, then we move on to Simple Rule #4.

Simple Rule #4:

Set up three separate trays for items of different time-priority. (*I say "time-priority" so as not to confuse it with "life-priority." See Problem VI.)*

If you cannot touch an item only once en route to its final destination, then put it into a tray depending upon when you have to act upon it:

Tray #1: It has to be dealt with *today.*

Tray #2: It has to be dealt with *before a certain date but not today.*

Tray #3: It has to be dealt with *sooner or later but not by any particular date.*

There; now everything is in three neat trays and your desk looks really neat. Isn't that better?

Simple Rule #5:

Touch each Tray 1 item only once more today.

At the end of the day, Tray #1 should be empty. If it isn't, don't torture yourself; let the unfinished item(s) stay there one more day and get them done for sure tomorrow.

Simple Rule #6:

Subdivide Tray #2 according to deadline date.

Notebook dividers with tabs are handy for separating items according to date; so are manila folders and accordion files.

Of course, not every item comes with a specified deadline date for completion. That's where Simple Rule #1 for Problem IV is invaluable: You're in charge, so you set the date.

Simple Rule #7:

The items in Tray #3 are ripe for leapfrogging.(see Simple Rule #1 for Problem VI.)

Take a look every so often at Tray #3 and leapfrog anything you want over everything else. That's the beauty of being in charge.