

## Archive your email messages in Gmail

Use these steps to clear out the messages in your Gmail account, without throwing them away forever (although that isn't a bad idea either!). Archiving is the equivalent of hiding the messages so they are out of your line of sight.

### Why bother?

With so much space available (and so little time!) it's easy for that inbox to get very full, very quickly. And when it does, it drains your energy and makes you feel like you're a big fat failure. Funny how a bunch of emails can have that effect and bleck, that's no way to live, eh?

Typically we each have a threshold for unread messages and the file count Google show graciously shows every time we look at our account. You'll typically see a counter for unread messages and then the total number of messages in the upper right area of the screen. My tolerance for unread messages is about 100, although I start getting antsy at about 70 or so). What is yours? Whatever it is, that's your clue to get rid of stuff.

If you're not quite ready to delete everything 'cuz you *might* need it sometime, archive (hide) them. Google gives us a ton of space to store stuff and until that changes, well, archiving is a great way to relieve the angst that comes from hundreds or thousands of emails clogging up the works.

When you archive messages, they don't disappear forever (use the Delete option for that), they are available any time you need them. And since the powerful Google search option works inside Gmail, you can do all sorts of fancy searches to find that message you need.

### Before you begin

You'll need

- access to the Internet
- a Gmail account (yeah, I know, no duh, eh?)
- the date you want to use for archiving for this walk through (write this on a slip of paper so you don't forget it)

### Step by step

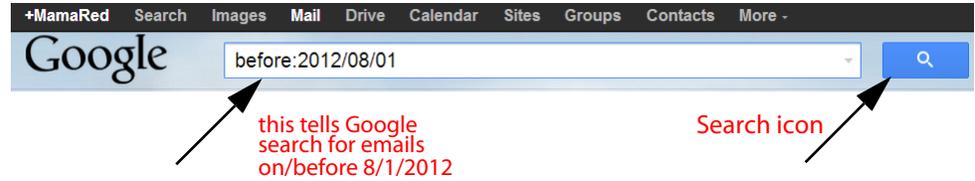
- 1 Close applications and websites you don't need right now  
This gives all the computer resources to this task so it gets done more quickly.
- 2 Log in to your Gmail account

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**3** In the Search box at the top of your screen, type the date in this format:  
before:yyyy/mm/dd

yyyy=4 digit year, mm=2 digit month, dd=2 digit day

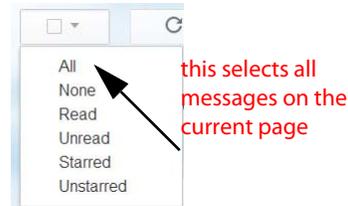
For this example, we'll use 8/1/2012 as our cut off date (which means we'll archive everything **on or prior** to 8/1/2012)



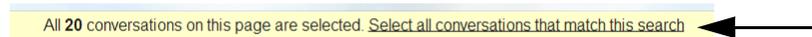
**4** Click the **Search** icon

**5** From the Selection drop down menu, select **All**

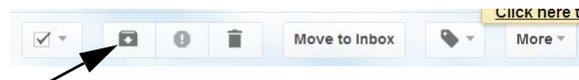
You'll see a checkmark beside each message on the *current* page.



**6** Click **Select all conversations that match this search** option



**7** Click the **Archive** button



**8** Gmail reminds you this affects all the conversations (messages) with the date you searched for

Since this is what you want to do, this is a good thing. And since these are being archived instead of deleted, you can still find them later on.

**9** Click the **OK** button

It might take a while to do this if you have lots and lots of messages OR are on a slower Internet connection. Be patient and let Google its thing. When it is done, the message "All conversations have been archived. [Learn More](#). [Undo](#)." displays. Bingo, bango. Done.

