

## Tax Tips from the Source

Even with the best intentions, filing taxes often becomes an event that is put off until the very last minute. For those who are not accountants, tax laws can be confusing, leaving many unsure of what they may deduct, and how they should file. However, according to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the process can be simpler than you may think. Here are ten tax tips direct from the IRS designed to make your filing easier than ever:

1. **Organize.** Take time throughout the year to store and organize your records and receipts in one place. Remember to include the income, deduction, or tax credit items that you reported the previous year. Organizing and maintaining a filing system will keep everything in one place, and make filling out forms that much simpler.
2. **Avoid Procrastination.** Procrastination is often tempting. However, doing your taxes sooner rather than later will allow you extra time to sort out potential problems or questions that might arise. Also, with time on your side, you will be more likely to avoid mistakes, as well as have the opportunity to discover all applicable tax savings.
3. **Look up the IRS Online.** At [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) you will discover many sources of information. You will be able to download and print tax forms, have access to tax law information, and will find a list of answers to frequently asked questions.
4. **Get Tax Assistance for FREE.** Individuals needing assistance can call the IRS tax help line. They also offer recorded messages covering approximately 150 tax topics. Also, libraries and post offices will usually provide both the needed tax forms and instructions.
5. **More FREE Tax Assistance.** The IRS provides Volunteer Income Tax Assistance and Tax Counseling for the Elderly at locations across the country. To find a volunteer location near you call 800-829-1040. By dialing this number you will also learn the dates and hours of available service.
6. **E-file.** E-filing presents an easy and convenient method of filing your taxes. Errors are reduced, and refunds are returned in half the time as compared to those who mail their documents. At [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) you will find a link, e-file, which will take you to companies that provide this service.
7. **Double-check.** When you have finished with your forms, take a couple of extra minutes to double-check your information, especially your Social Security number. Check your spelling, math, and if your forms are hand written, make sure they are legible.
8. **Use Direct Deposit.** If you are due a refund, the direct deposit option will allow for a faster return and decrease chances of theft. When you enter information for this option take the time to double check your bank account number to avoid errors.
9. **Stay Calm.** If you owe the IRS money, but can't afford to pay, stay calm. Options for paying with a credit card—or even monthly installments—do exist. Filing your return on time, or requesting an extension on time, can save you from possible late filing fees. For more information go to [www.officialpayments.com](http://www.officialpayments.com) or [www.pay1040.com](http://www.pay1040.com).
10. **Apply for an Extension.** If your time is up, and your forms aren't ready, you can request an extension deadline of August 15. To make this request: call 888-796-1074 or e-file Form 4868. If you owe money on your taxes, you will still be subject to payment due on April 15. Failure to do so may subject you to late charges with interest.

These easy-to-follow steps will help to prevent any unnecessary tax apprehension, and can help to make the process that much smoother. Starting early, and organizing throughout the year, will greatly reduce chances of error and stress. Who knows? Next year's tax return may just be the easiest yet!