



ORGANIZING EMAIL · LABELS

Why Labels Beat Folders

A simpler way to keep email tidy — and find anything in seconds. This guide shows you **why** labels work better than folders, then **how** to create one and stick it on a message.



The one big difference

A **folder** is like a physical drawer: a message can only live in **one** drawer at a time. So when an email fits two topics — say a receipt that's also a tax document — you have to pick just one drawer and hope you remember which one later. A **label** is more like a sticker: you can put **as many labels as you like** on the **same** message, and it still lives in just one place. Click any label and every message wearing it appears instantly.

Folders

One email can live in only one folder.



Acme invoice #1042

from billing@acme.com



Receipts ← you must choose just one



Taxes



Acme

Labels

The same email can wear several labels at once.



Acme invoice #1042

from billing@acme.com

Receipts

Taxes

Acme

Find it under **any** of these — no need to remember the “right” place.



Good news: you don't lose anything by switching.

Fastmail lets you organize with **Labels** or **Folders** — you choose under **Settings › Mail › Mail organization**. Picking **Labels** simply gives you the extra power of putting a message in more than one place at once.

Organize messages with



Work



Family



Friends

☐ Folders

Work x

Family x

Friends

☒ Labels

In **Settings** › **Mail** › **Mail organization**, choose **Labels** (right) to turn on multi-label power.



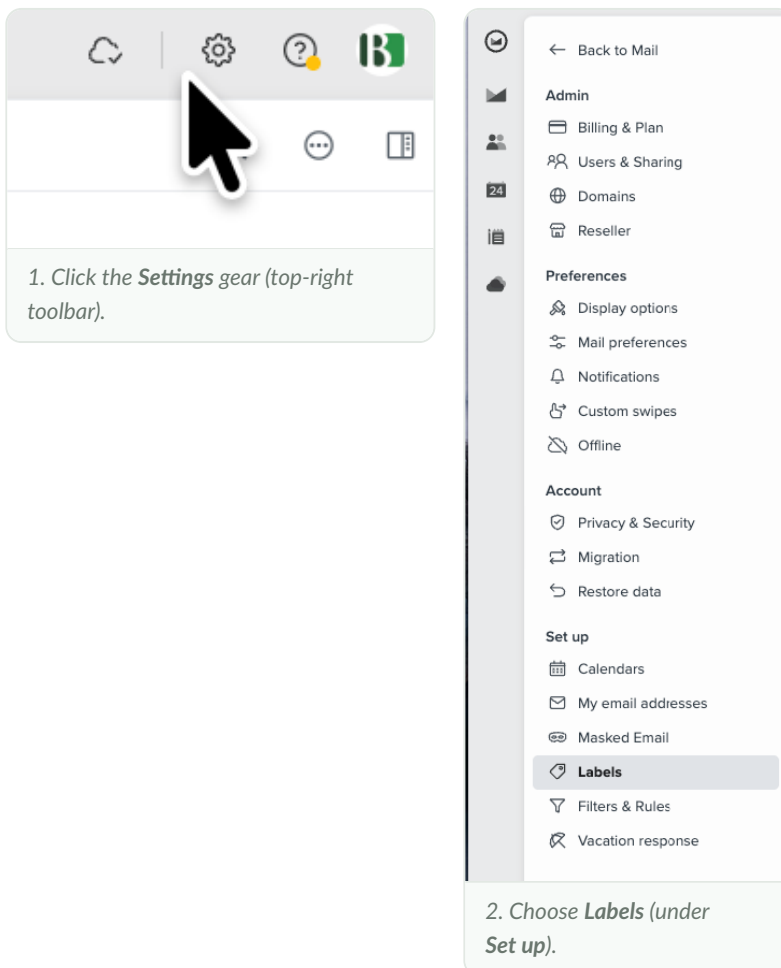
Quick Steps: Create & Apply a Label

- 1 Click the **Settings** gear (top-right), then choose **Labels**.
- 2 Click **+ Create label**.
- 3 Type a **Name** (for example, **Follow Up**), pick a **Color**, and leave **Parent** as **Inbox** unless you want to nest it.
- 4 Click **Save**. Your new label now appears in the left sidebar.
- 5 To **apply** it: open or select a message, then **drag it onto the label** in the sidebar — or use the **label** button in the toolbar and tick the label.

Illustrated Walkthrough

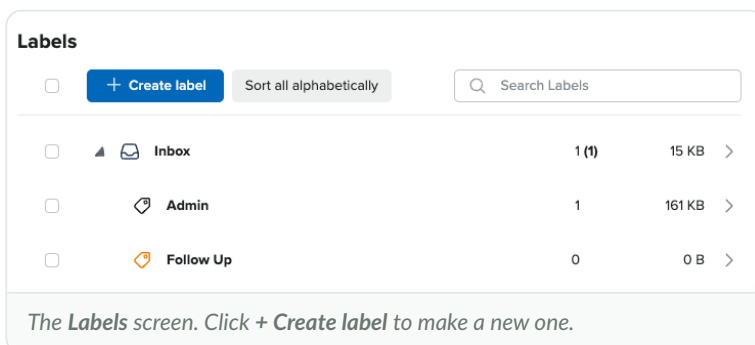
1 Open Settings and choose Labels

Click the **Settings** gear in the **top-right corner** of the window. A menu slides in on the left — under **Set up**, click **Labels**.



2 Click “+ Create label”

You'll see every label you already have. At the top is a blue **+ Create label** button — click it to start a new one.



3 Name it, color it, and save

Give the label a short, clear **Name** — something you'd naturally look for, like `Follow Up` or `Receipts`. Pick a **Color** so it stands out in your message list, and leave **Parent** set to **Inbox** for a top-level label. Then click **Save**.

The screenshot shows the 'Edit' interface for a label named 'Follow Up'. The breadcrumb is 'Labels > Follow Up'. The 'Name' field contains 'Follow Up' with a feedback message 'Great choice.' below it. The 'Parent' dropdown is set to 'Inbox'. The 'Color' dropdown shows an orange color. Under 'Message list', the checkbox 'Show label in message list' is checked. Under 'Show in sidebar', the radio button 'Always show' is selected. At the bottom are 'Save', 'Cancel', and 'Delete label' buttons. A footer note says: 'Set the **Name**, choose a **Color**, then **Save**. That's the whole setup.'

! "Parent" just means nesting.

Leave it on **Inbox** for a normal label. If you later want a label tucked *inside* another (like `Clients > Acme`), set the parent to the outer label.

4 Apply the label to a message

Now stick that label on an email. There are two easy ways:

- **Drag and drop** — click a message in your list and drag it onto the label's name in the left sidebar.
- **Use the toolbar** — select the message, click the **label** (tag) button at the top, and tick the label you want. Tick more than one to apply several at once — that's the multi-label power folders can't give you.

➔ Finding labelled mail later.

Click any label in the sidebar to see **every** message wearing it — even messages that also carry other labels. Nothing ever gets "buried" in the wrong drawer again.

5 That's it — build up a small set

You don't need dozens of labels. Start with a handful that match how you actually work — for example `Follow Up`, `Receipts`, and `Waiting on Reply` — and add more only when you find yourself searching for the same kind of message again and again.

➤ Working on a team?

Labels can be **shared** so everyone files things the same way — which makes it easy to find a colleague's work when they're out. See the companion guide, **Organizing & Sharing Labels with Your Team**.



Provided to you free of charge, courtesy of **Bourdage Consulting**

(817) 994-7111 · docbob.com · *If your computer is sick... call Dr. Bob.*