

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.



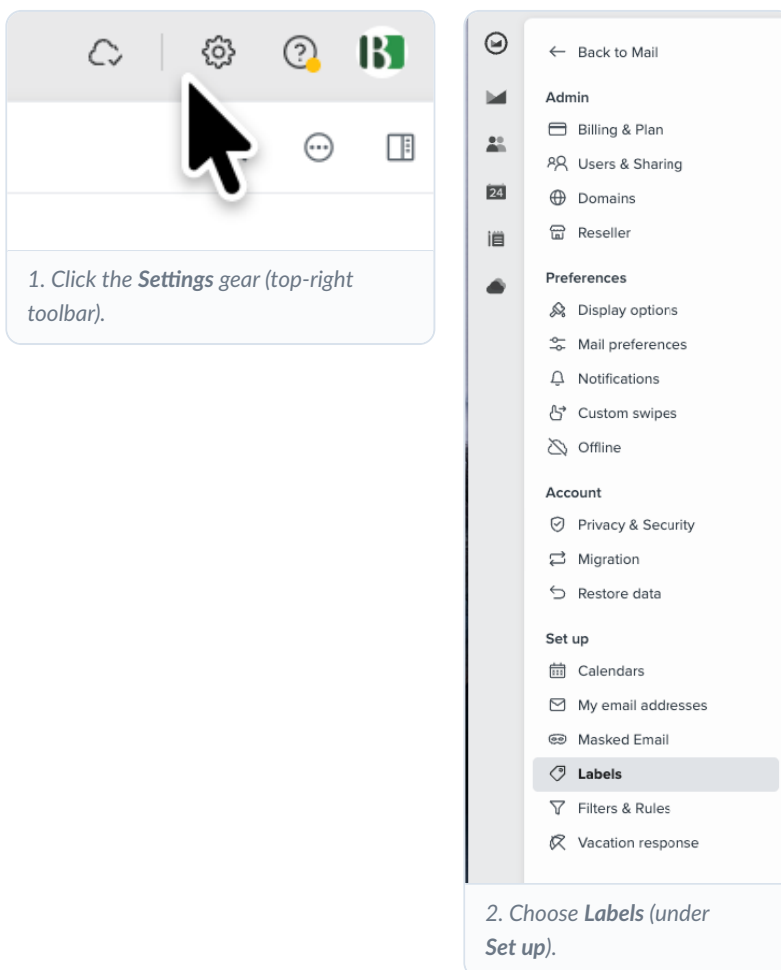
Quick Steps: Create & Apply a Label

- 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

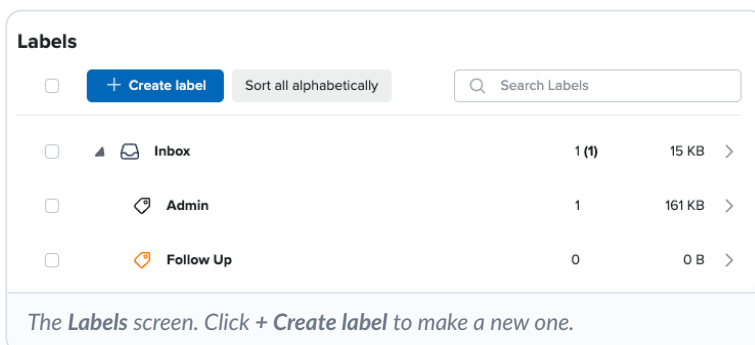
1 Open Settings and choose Labels

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' dialog for a label named 'Follow Up'. The dialog has a title bar with 'Labels > Follow Up'. Inside, there's a section titled 'Edit' with the following fields and options:

- Name:** A text input field containing 'Follow Up'. Below it, a message says 'Great choice.'
- Parent:** A dropdown menu set to 'Inbox'.
- Color:** A color picker showing an orange color.
- Message list:** A checkbox labeled 'Show label in message list' which is checked.
- Show in sidebar:** Four radio button options: 'Always show' (selected), 'Hide if no unread', 'Hide if empty', and 'Always hide'.
- Show advanced preferences:** A link.
- Buttons:** 'Save' (blue), 'Cancel' (grey), and 'Delete label' (red).

At the bottom of the dialog, a message reads: '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**.



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