

EMAIL AUTOMATION • RULES

Filters & Rules: The Basics

Let Fastmail sort your mail for you. This guide explains the difference between **Filters** and **Rules**, then walks you through building your very first rule — no technical know-how required.

Filters vs. Rules — what's the difference?

Both do work for you automatically, but they're not the same thing. **Filters** are Fastmail's **built-in** protections — Blocked Senders and Spam Protection — that catch obvious junk before it ever reaches you. **Rules** are recipes **you** create: “if a message looks like this, *then* do that.” This guide is about Rules.

Filters — built in

Fastmail's automatic gatekeepers.

- **Blocked Senders** — addresses or whole domains you've banned; their mail goes straight to Trash.
- **Spam Protection** — Fastmail's spam detector sends suspected junk to your Spam folder.
- They run **first**, before any of your rules.

Rules — made by you

Your own “if this, then that” recipes.

- You choose the **conditions** (what to match) and the **actions** (what to do).
- File, label, archive, mark read, delete — automatically, as mail arrives.
- Run **after** the built-in filters, in the order you list them.

Filters

Get rid of unwanted mail with Blocked Senders and Spam Protection. Filters apply before rules and address actions. Your contacts skip these filters.

Blocked senders Block an email address or a whole domain. Messages go straight to the Trash. [View and edit →](#)

Spam protection Messages detected as spam are sent to your Spam folder. Use [Advanced settings →](#) **Report spam** to personalize your results.

*The **Filters** section in **Settings** › **Filters & Rules**. Note: “Filters apply before rules.”*

Every rule has the same shape

A rule is just two halves: the **conditions** that decide which messages it applies to, and the **actions** it takes on them. If you can finish the sentence “*When an email is... do this...*,” you can build a rule.

IF – CONDITIONSThe message is **From** (match **all** or **any** of your conditions)**THEN – ACTIONS****Add label "Microsoft" • Archive**

(tick one action, or several)

Quick Steps: Create & Apply a Rule

- 1 Open the **Settings** gear, choose **Filters & Rules**, and click **+ Create rule**.
- 2 Set your **condition**: pick **From** (or Subject, To, etc.) and type what to match — then click **Continue**.
- 3 Tick the **actions** you want — for example **Add label** and **Archive**.
- 4 Under **Apply to...**, choose **New matching messages on arrival**, and tick **All matching... now** if you also want to sort mail you already have.
- 5 Give it a **Name**, then click **Do it** (or **Save**).

Illustrated Walkthrough**1 Open Filters & Rules and click "+ Create rule"**

Click the **Settings** gear (top-right), then choose **Filters & Rules**. Scroll to the **Rules** section and click **+ Create rule**. Any rules you already have are listed here too — you can click one to edit it later.

Rules

Rules let you take actions automatically when a message arrives.

☐ **+ Create rule**

☐ Matches "hometalk.com"	● Mark read • Add label Hometalk • Archive • Continue to apply other rules	>
☐ Otter ai	Add label AI/Otter.ai • Continue to apply other rules	>
☐ BJ's Warehouse	Add label Vendors/BJ's Warehouse • Continue to apply other rules	>

The Rules section. Click + Create rule to start. (The examples show rules that add a label and archive.)

2 Set the condition (the “if”)

Decide which messages the rule should catch. Leave the first box on **From** to match the sender, then type what to look for in the field beside it. Click **Continue** when you’re ready.

Filters & Rules > Create rule

If **all** of the following conditions apply

1 From [Add condition](#)

[Continue](#) [Cancel](#) [Switch to no-preview rules \(regular expressions supported\)](#)

Choose a field (From) and type what to match. **Add condition** lets you stack more.

💡 “All” vs “Any”.

That little dropdown at the top matters. **All** means a message must match *every* condition you list. **Any** means matching *just one* is enough — handy when you want one rule to catch many different senders.

3 Choose what happens (the “then”)

Now tick the **actions** Fastmail should take on matching mail. You can tick more than one. The most useful for staying organized are **Add label** (tag it) and **Archive (remove Inbox label)** (file it out of the Inbox).

Create rule

from: "microsoft"

☐ Mark read ●
☐ Pin ★
☐ Notify me
☐ Archive (remove Inbox label)
☐ Add label [Gmail] ▼
☐ Snooze until 8:00 AM ▼
☐ Send a copy to email@example.com
☐ Delete to trash
☐ Send to spam
☒ Continue to apply other rules
 Cannot be used if moving or deleting a message.

Apply to...

☐ All 36 matching conversations now
☒ New matching messages on arrival

Name

Optional. Remind yourself of this rule's purpose.

Save **Cancel**

Tick any actions you want: Mark read, Archive, Add label, Delete to trash, and more.

! “Continue to apply other rules.”

Leave this ticked if you want your remaining rules to keep checking the message. Fastmail turns it off automatically when an action **moves or deletes** the message (like Delete to trash), since there's nothing left for later rules to act on.

4 Name it, decide what it applies to, and save

Pick the dropdown value for any action that needs one (for example, **Add label** lets you choose *which* label). Under **Apply to...**, keep **New matching messages on arrival** so the rule works going forward — and tick **All matching conversations now** if you'd also like it to tidy up mail already in your mailbox. Give the rule a short **Name** so you'll recognize it later, then click **Do it**.

Create rule

from:"microsoft"

- ☐ Mark read
- ☐ Pin
- ☐ Notify me
- ☐ Archive (remove Inbox label)
- ☒ Add label Microsoft
- ☐ Snooze until 8:00 AM
- ☐ Send a copy to email@example.com
- ☐ Delete to trash
- ☐ Send to spam
- ☒ Continue to apply other rules
Cannot be used if moving or deleting a message.

Apply to...

- ☒ All 36 matching conversations now
- ☒ New matching messages on arrival

Name

Microsoft

Optional. Remind yourself of this rule's purpose.

Do it **Cancel**

A finished rule: Add label "Microsoft", applied to existing and new mail, named "Microsoft."

5 That's a rule! Two ways to go deeper

You now know the whole pattern: **conditions** in, **actions** out. From here, two companion guides put rules to work:

➤ **Organizing Incoming Mail with Rules.**

Use rules to **add a label and archive** automatically, so mail arrives already sorted into the label structure you've built.

➤ **Taming Junk Mail with Rules.**

How to build a powerful "delete" rule for unwanted senders — and how that compares to Fastmail's built-in Spam Protection.



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