

# Five minutes now, before the holidays

A short list of things worth doing this month, and one folder worth starting today. None of it requires a file cabinet or an appointment.



## 1 Five-minute tasks

Small checks you can knock out over coffee.

### CHECK THESE

- ☐ **Check one pay stub**  
Compare federal tax withheld year to date to what you owed last year. If the two are far apart, better to find out now than in April.
- ☐ **Review your autopays**  
Read every recurring charge on a statement out loud. Most households find one they forgot about. Cancel it now and save twelve months, not one.

### DON'T SKIP THESE

- ☐ **Update your beneficiaries**  
These override your will. If no one's named, or that person has died, the account can still end up in probate.  
→ **Priority after a marriage, divorce, birth, or death**
- ☐ **Confirm your RMD is scheduled**  
Born 1951–1959: distributions start at 73. Born 1960+: they start at 75. Money must come out by December 31 each year.

**A missed RMD costs 25%** of what you should have taken (10% if corrected quickly). Giving to charity anyway? Ask about a qualified charitable distribution.

## 2 Start gathering now

One folder, paper or digital. Start it today.

### AS IT ARRIVES

- ☐ **Income documents**  
W-2s, 1099s, Social Security statements, pension statements, K-1s. They land January–March; file each one the day it shows up.
- ☐ **Last year's return**  
Find it now. Your preparer needs it, and it's the fastest way to spot what changed.

### WORTH TRACKING DOWN

- ☐ **Receipts that matter**  
Charitable gifts, significant medical expenses, property tax bills, tuition or student loan interest, closing documents.
- ☐ **Anything that changed**  
New job, new baby, new address, retirement, marriage, divorce, an inheritance, a home sale. Write it on a note for the folder.

### NOTES FOR MY ADVISOR

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### Questions about any of this?

Bring the folder to your next appointment. We'll go through it together.

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