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2016, which promises to simplify and decrease the cost of filing our tax returns.

Apr. 14, 2016



Here's the good news- You're taxes aren't due on April 15.

This year, because of holidays officially observed only in Washington, D.C. (Emancipation Day) and Maine and Massachusetts (Patriots Day), the deadline for filing personal returns is April 18, or April 19 if you live in Maine or Massachusetts.

Here's the bad news- You still have to file tax returns and pay your taxes. An extra

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few. Many of the forms can be found online now at your employer's or brokerage firm's website. Collect all the documents, and, if you have a scanner, perhaps scan them in and store them in a virtual folder online.

2. **File Online**— Over 70% of individual taxpayers file online now, and doing so saves you the time and effort of having to get envelopes, photocopy returns, schedules and forms, and then trek to the post office to mail it all in.
3. **Check and Double Check Your Return**— Check your math and Social Security numbers. And make sure you sign your return. Of course, if you file electronically, your math is checked automatically and you can't file until you affirmatively "sign" the return. Just another example of how filing online saves time.
4. **File For An Extension**— But beware. . . filing for an extension only extends the time you have to file a return. You still have to pay all taxes due by April 18 (this year's due date). You will still have to send a check in by April 18 (the mailbox rule).
5. **Don't Worry About (or Wait For) Forms 1095-B and 1095-C**— These forms show you what type of health insurance you had during the prior year, as mandated by the Affordable Care Act. But you don't need them to file a return.
6. **Retirement Plans**— Don't forget that you can make 2015 contributions to your IRA or Roth until April 18, 2016.
7. **Can't Pay the Tax Due**— The IRS [notes](#) that taxpayers who can't pay by April 18 often qualify to set up a monthly payment agreement with the IRS using its [Online Payment Agreement](#) option.

We can't go back in time and start doing our taxes earlier, but perhaps we can look forward to the passing of the recently introduced [Tax Filing Simplification Act of 2016](#), which promises to simplify and decrease the cost of filing our tax returns. And if that doesn't pass, we can find solace in the words of another American patriot, Ben Franklin, who noted that nothing is certain but death and taxes.

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