

# Gmail Full? Free Up Space with These Quick and Effective Tricks



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The “storage running out” notification on Gmail is a common experience for many users in Italy and Europe. With 15 GB of free storage shared across Gmail, Google Drive, and Google Photos, reaching the limit is easier than you might think. This space, while generous, fills up quickly, not so much due to the number of emails, but because of the size of their attachments. Mediterranean culture, which combines tradition and innovation, is also reflected in the use of email: a mix of personal communications, newsletters, work documents, and, naturally, photos and videos of convivial moments. When the mailbox is full, sending and receiving new messages stops, making a targeted cleanup or the purchase of additional space necessary.

In a context where Gmail is the most used email provider, with a penetration of 56% in Italy, efficient space management becomes a fundamental daily skill. Fortunately, it is not always necessary to buy more memory. Strategies and tools exist, often integrated into Gmail itself, that allow you to quickly identify and remove the most cumbersome files. Understanding how search operators and space management features work can transform a tedious operation into a quick and effective process, ensuring that our mailbox, a digital mirror of our professional and personal lives, always remains functional.

## Why does Gmail space run out?

The storage space of a free Google account is fixed at 15 GB, shared between Gmail, Google Drive, and Google Photos. Although 15 GB might seem like a huge amount, it is the attachments that consume most of the space. A single video, a high-resolution presentation, or a folder of images can occupy hundreds of megabytes, the equivalent of thousands of text-only emails. Over time, the accumulation of these files, often forgotten after being downloaded, inevitably leads to saturating the available memory. This problem is accentuated by the fact that many people use the same email address for years, accumulating a vast digital archive.

In addition to sent and received attachments, other elements also contribute to filling up space. Automatic WhatsApp backups on Google Drive, for example, can occupy several gigabytes. The same applies to files stored directly on Drive and photos and videos saved in original quality on Google Photos. It is therefore essential to have an overview of how space is distributed among the various services. Google One offers specific tools to analyze storage usage and understand which file categories are taking up the most memory, allowing for targeted and conscious intervention.

## Identify the heaviest emails with search operators

The quickest way to free up significant space is to locate and delete emails with the largest attachments. Gmail provides powerful search tools, known as operators, which allow you to filter messages based on specific criteria, including size. Using these commands is simple and does not require installing additional software. Their effectiveness lies in the ability to show only messages that exceed a certain size threshold in seconds, making cleaning a

surgical operation.

To find the most cumbersome emails, simply type a specific command in the Gmail search bar. For example, by writing **larger:10m**, all messages exceeding 10 megabytes will be displayed. You can modify the number to suit your needs (e.g., *larger:5m* or *larger:20m*). A similar operator is **size:**, which works the same way (e.g., *size:10000000* to search for files of 10 million bytes). These commands can be combined with other filters, such as the sender's name or a date range, to further refine the search and ensure important communications are not deleted. If you want to learn more about optimizing your searches, you can consult our [guide on advanced search in Gmail](#).

## Practical guide to using size filters

Once you understand how search operators work, the next step is to apply them strategically. an effective approach is to start with the largest files and then gradually go down. You can start with a search like **larger:25m** to find the main “culprits”. After reviewing and deleting these messages, you can reduce the threshold to **larger:10m** and so on. This cascading method guarantees maximum space recovery with minimum effort. Before deleting an email, it is always good practice to download the attachment to your computer if you think it might be needed in the future.

In addition to basic commands, Gmail offers an advanced search interface that further simplifies the process. By clicking on the settings icon to the right of the search bar, a panel opens where you can enter the desired criteria, including size, without having to memorize operators. Here you can specify that the size is “greater than” a certain value and select the unit of measurement (MB, KB,

or bytes). This interface also allows you to filter for messages containing attachments (using the “*Has attachment*” option), making the hunt for heavy files even more precise.

## **Delete emails and empty the trash: the final steps**

After identifying the emails to delete, the deletion process is simple. You can select messages individually by checking the box to the left of each email, or select them all together by clicking the main selection box at the top. Once selected, just click the trash icon to move them. However, this action alone does not immediately free up space. Deleted messages are moved to the Trash, where they remain for 30 days before being permanently deleted by Google.

To recover storage space immediately, it is essential to empty the Trash manually. To do this, access the “Trash” folder from the Gmail side menu and click on “Empty Trash now”. This action is irreversible, so it is crucial to be sure you haven’t accidentally deleted important emails. Another area to check is the “Spam” folder. Messages in this folder also take up space and should be deleted regularly. Periodic management of Trash and Spam is a good habit to keep the mailbox tidy and storage space under control.

## **Preventive strategies for long-term management**

Freeing up space is important, but preventing it from filling up again is even more so. An effective strategy is to proactively manage large attachments. Instead of sending heavy files directly via email, it is advisable to upload them to Google Drive and share the link. This approach not only preserves space in the sender’s and recipient’s mailboxes but also offers greater control over files,

such as the ability to revoke access. For very large files, this is considered standard practice in the professional world.

Another useful habit is the periodic cleaning of the “Promotions” and “Social” categories. These sections can accumulate thousands of messages over time which, although individually light, can collectively occupy considerable space. Dedicating a few minutes a week to bulk delete these communications can make a big difference. Additionally, using filters to automatically archive or delete newsletters or notifications you are not interested in can help keep the main inbox clean. Learning to use filters is a fundamental step for efficient organization, as explained in our [complete guide to Gmail filters](#).

Finally, it is wise to consider purchasing additional space via Google One if your needs require it. Paid plans offer not only more gigabytes but also additional benefits. This option, combined with careful management of free space, represents the definitive solution for those who no longer want to worry about storage limits. For those considering this option, it is useful to read our [guide to checking and freeing up Google memory](#).

## Conclusions

Managing space on Gmail doesn't have to be an arduous task. With the right tools and a methodical approach, it is possible to keep your email inbox efficient and functional, avoiding the frustration of full memory. The strategic use of search operators, such as *larger:*, allows you to precisely identify and remove the heaviest emails, which are primarily responsible for space saturation. Remembering to regularly empty the Trash and Spam folder is a crucial step to make the cleaning effective.

Adopting preventive habits, such as sharing files via Google Drive instead of as attachments and periodically cleaning promotional emails, contributes to keeping storage space under control in the long term. In a digital world where email remains a central communication tool, both in the private and professional spheres, mastering these simple techniques means ensuring continuity in your workflow and interactions. Technology, when used with awareness, becomes a valuable ally for a simpler and more organized digital life.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **How can I find the heaviest emails taking up space on Gmail?**

To locate the most cumbersome emails, you can use search operators directly in the Gmail search bar. For example, typing `size:10m` will show you all emails larger than 10 megabytes. You can modify the number to suit your needs (e.g., `size:5m` for files over 5 MB). This method is ideal for quickly identifying messages with large attachments that are consuming your storage space.

### **How much free storage space does Gmail offer and what does it include?**

Every Google account provides 15 GB of free storage space. It is important to know that this space is not dedicated solely to Gmail, but is shared with other services like Google Drive (for files) and Google Photos (for images and videos). Consequently, the accumulation of files in any of these services contributes to filling up the total available space.

### **What happens when I delete an email? Does it free up space immediately?**

No, when you delete an email, it is moved to the Trash, where it remains for 30 days before being permanently deleted. During this period, emails in the Trash continue to occupy storage space. To free up space immediately, you must manually empty the Trash and the Spam folder.

### **What can I do if I don't want to delete emails but need more space?**

If the emails are important, there are alternatives to deletion. One option is to purchase more storage space through a Google One subscription. Alternatively, you can download the heaviest attachments to your computer or an external drive and then delete the original email from Gmail. Another strategy is to save the attachments directly to Google Drive and subsequently delete the message from the inbox.

### **Besides “size:”, what other search commands are useful for cleaning up?**

Gmail offers several advanced search operators. For example, you can use `has:attachment` to find all emails containing an attachment. Combining it, `has:attachment size:5m` restricts the search to only emails with attachments larger than 5 MB. You can also use `before:YYYY/MM/DD` to find emails older than a certain date or `filename:.pdf` to search for specific file types.