

# Unsubscribing from lists

By Richard Lowe

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I'm sure you've received messages from mailing lists and wanted to unsubscribe. Perhaps you don't remember subscribing in the first place, or maybe you've just grown tired of the subject. For whatever reason, you just want to get off the list, and you want off fast.

On virtually every list, it is common practice to put the unsubscribe instructions at the bottom of every message (Yahoo groups, also called egroups, is an exception in that sometimes there are no unsubscribe instructions at all). You simply do what is described and you will be removed from the list.

In most cases, a simple blank email to an email address or a clicked link is all you need to do. Sometimes you need to include the word "remove" or "unsubscribe" in the subject or body of the message. It just depends upon the conventions of the list.

Now, this article only applies to mailing lists to which you have subscribed (opt-in). Before you click on any link or send an email off to parts unknown that the message is not spam. Never reply or click on any links in spam - just delete the message unread.

Don't get mad about receiving mailings from various lists. Most of these now require double-opt-in, which pretty much means you have to want to be subscribed. This is very safe for the list owner

because not only do the list members subscribe to the list, but they must also do something else (usually return a blank email) to verify that they indeed do want to subscribe.

It's generally not a good idea to try and reply asking to be removed from the list. Most lists have specific unsubscribe functions and simply writing an email saying "please remove me" will not work. Quite often, in fact, a reply will instead be sent to ALL members of the list, which simply makes you look foolish.

Also, the list owner is using one of the list services because it automates everything. Think of the effort that he or she would have to do through of all requests were handled manually. Thus, it is in everyone's best interest to spend a couple of minutes to learn how to unsubscribe so it is done properly.

If you send an email to unsubscribe from a list and it doesn't work, you may have subscribed under a different email address. Take a look at the message from the list to see where it was sent. If it was sent to another email address (lots of people have more than one) you may have to send a blank email from that address to unsubscribe.

Egroups - This has merged with Yahoo groups. See that section for more information.

Listbot - Listbot is no more. It has been shut down.

Onelist - This has merged with Yahoo groups. See that section for more information.

Smartgroups - To remove yourself from one of these lists, simply send AN email to `groupname-unsubscribe@smartgroups.com`. Groupname is the name of the smartgroup. You can also log in and unsubscribe (or change your email settings) from the web.

Topica - To unsubscribe from a Topica email list, scroll down to the bottom of the email. Simply click the unsubscribe link. Alternately, you can send an email to the specified address. It does not matter what the email contains. Do not reply to the message that you received, as this will simply go to the person who posted and will NOT unsubscribe you.

Various message boards - The unsubscribe function varies, but is virtually always explained at the bottom of the message. I've found that most message boards use a clickable link (this is because they are frequently installed on web sites which do not allow for returned email messages). Sometimes message boards require you to log in and change your settings to stop receiving emails.

Yahoo Groups - Unsubscribing from egroups is easy, but the instructions are often hidden or missing entirely. This seems to be especially true of the digest form of lists. To unsubscribe, simply take the name of the egroup (usually in the subject surrounded by square brackets) and create an email address of that name followed by "-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com". For example, to unsubscribe from "[toms-list]" send an email to "toms-list-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com".

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