

COLD EMAIL

Email Warm-Up

How Long It Takes

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What Is Email Warm-Up and How Long Does It Take? (With a Day-by-Day Schedule)

Short answer: Email warm-up is the process of building a sending reputation for a new inbox or domain by starting with a few emails a day and raising the volume gradually while those emails get opened and answered. For cold email, plan on two to four weeks of warm-up before the first campaign and four to six weeks to reach full volume.

Key takeaways

- Warm-up builds **reputation**; authentication (SPF, DKIM, DMARC) only proves **identity**. You need both, and authentication comes first.
- Google publishes no warm-up length. Its guidance is to **start low, raise volume gradually and avoid sudden spikes**.
- A practical plan: **14 days of warm-up only**, then a two-week cold ramp, reaching full volume around day 29.
- Warm-up never ends completely: keep a small background level running and **re-warm after any break or bounce spike**.

Why a new inbox cannot simply start sending

Thing	What it does	How long it takes
Authentication (SPF, DKIM, DMARC)	Proves the email really comes from your domain	An hour of DNS work
Warm-up	Builds a first reputation with low volume and high engagement	2 to 4 weeks
Ramp-up	Raises real campaign volume step by step	Another 2 weeks or so

A day-by-day schedule for one new inbox

Days	Warm-up emails per day	Cold emails per day	What to watch
0	0	0	Buy the domain, set SPF, DKIM, DMARC, add a real name, photo and signature
1 to 7	5 rising to 15	0	Warm-up emails landing in the inbox, not spam
8 to 14	15 rising to 30	0	Reply rate on warm-up; send a few real emails to colleagues and clients
15 to 21	20 to 30	5 rising to 10	Bounces under 2% (our threshold), no spam complaints
22 to 28	15 to 20	15 rising to 25	Where test emails land in Gmail and Outlook
29 onward	10 to 15 (keep running)	Up to 30	Weekly check of reputation and placement

Quick answers

How long does email warm-up take?

For a new inbox on a new domain, plan on two to four weeks of warm-up before any cold email and about four to six weeks before full daily volume. Published vendor guides range from two to eight weeks. Mailbox providers give no fixed number; Google only says to increase volume gradually.

Can I skip warm-up if my domain has SPF, DKIM and DMARC?

No. Authentication proves that the email really comes from your domain. It says nothing about whether you are a sender people want to hear from. Reputation comes from sending history: steady volume, low bounces, few spam complaints and real replies. A perfectly authenticated new domain still has no history.

How many emails a day should a warmed-up inbox send?

There is no official cap for cold email. Many outbound teams, including ours, keep each inbox to roughly 20 to 30 cold emails a day plus background warm-up, and add inboxes rather than volume. That figure is a working practice, not a provider rule. Google Workspace's own technical limit is far higher.

Does Google allow automated warm-up tools?

It is a gray area. Google's guidelines describe gradual volume increases to engaged recipients, not automated exchanges between inboxes. In early 2023 one sending tool, GMass, shut its warm-up network after reporting that Google told it to stop or lose Gmail API access. Many tools still offer warm-up over SMTP and IMAP.

Do I need to warm up an old domain or inbox?

Yes, if it has not sent at volume before or has been idle. An aged domain with normal business email history usually needs less time than a new one, but a new inbox on it still starts with no history. After any pause of a few weeks, ramp back up instead of resuming at full volume.

What is the difference between warm-up and ramp-up?

Warm-up usually means the low-volume, high-engagement phase before any campaign, often run by a tool. Ramp-up is the gradual increase in real campaign volume afterwards. People use the words interchangeably, but they are two phases, and skipping the second one causes most early deliverability problems.

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