

HOME SWEET OFFICE

8 TIPS FOR AN ORGANISED AND PRODUCTIVE HOME OFFICE

HOW TO



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ONE of the greatest benefits of a home office is the freedom to decorate and design it as you wish, but without letting either space lose their distinct identity.

In other words, we shouldn't blend the workplace with the rest of our personal space, i.e. home.

Whether you call your 'home office' a blessing or a curse, one thing's for sure: your mood and your productivity will be affected by how it is set up.

Just as a cluttered desk is a cluttered mind, a disorganised home office may be the source of unnecessary mind-blocks to new ideas and solutions.

Think your home office is a mess and is ruining your productivity?

Not to worry, because here are eight great tips to improve the organisation of your home office to make you more productive, keep the working mood positive and get back the focus you need to produce top quality work.

1 DON'T MIX WORK WITH PERSONAL LIFE

We'll start with the most evident tip, blending work and pleasure as one.

Even with the firmest intention to separate them in your home office at the initial stage, the two are bound to mix since your office is in your home.

'Don't take your work home with you' doesn't apply to SOHO (small office home office) workers.

What to do: Examine your home office from time to time to see how much of your workspace has been infested with distractions.

Resolve to clear away your television, game consoles, and other forms of distractions to keep them out of sight.

Maintain that boundary within your home where work begins and ends.

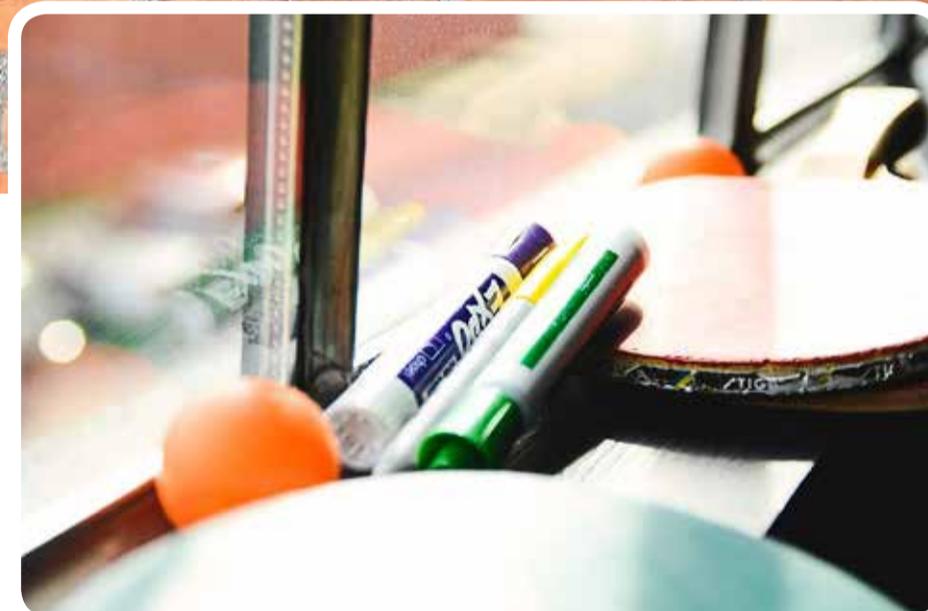
Keep this workspace as distinct from your other rooms as possible because such differentiation can have a psychological effect on how you divide work and play.

2 GET GOOD SEATING SUPPORT

Are you getting the seat support you need? You may not think comfort and support matter to your productivity, because who has the time to enjoy a real good chair when engrossed with tons of work?

As it turns out, that is precisely the reason why you should take note of your seating support if you are spending most of your time sitting while working.

According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, about 90% of adults experience back pain



AN ORGANISED AND PRODUCTIVE HOME OFFICE TAKES A LOT OF EXPERIMENTATION AND A BIT OF LUCK BEFORE YOU CAN GET IT JUST RIGHT.

at some point in their life, and 50% of the working population have back pain every year in the United States.

When you don't pay attention to your back, the desk chair can take a toll on your health, mood and subsequently, your work productivity.

What to do: Check out www.ontimesupplies.com/community/kb/furniture-guides/ergonomic-desk-chair-guide.html if you're keen on getting an ergonomically designed desk chair.

If you are a little tight on budget, consider purchasing a seat support for your desk chair.

3 INVEST IN BETTER LIGHTING

We often neglect lighting. Is your desk lamp too bright or too dim for work? Are you getting sufficient

natural light, the best kind, from the sun?

To have that, make sure your designated workspace has enough windows or openings to let the sunlight in.

The exposure can boost your mood and improve your sleep patterns. In times of unfavourable weather or long working nights, it is essential to get some artificial lighting in your workspace.

What to do: Experiment with different intensities or light tones to find out which one works best for you.

Depending on how spacious your workspace is, you might also consider having multiple, different light fixtures to set a comfortable mood for work.

Try to get multiple light fixtures, and at least a desk lamp with direct exposure over your

desk, which will facilitate the reading, writing or sketching of documents.

If, however, you do most of your work on your computer, check out www.clickonf5.org/3846/adjust-brightness-contrast-monitor/ on optimal brightness and contrast for your eyes.

4 KEEP YOUR TECH UPDATED AND RELIABLE

If you're going to be working at home most of the time, you've got to make sure that technology is your best accomplice.

Do you get frequent technical faults with your existing devices such as your computer, printer or connections? If you do, I'm sure it is a major source of frustration at work.

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*When life's pressures invade my space,
I escape to my secret place.
No one knows where that might be,
it's not on land, nor air or sea.*

*My secret place is a wonderland,
it holds no fears I understand,
that nothing in the world can find me,
here with my thoughts and dreams beside me.*

*I wonder in a field of dreams,
that feed my open mind it seems,
with all the riches of success,
the answers to questions I must address.*

*Then swimming in a pool of thoughts,
understanding past lost battles fought,
I realise the strength in me,
the courage, honour and dignity.*

*I can reach most any goal,
if I put in my heart and soul.
Stand up against any man,
this is who I really am.*

*All this I have found in my secret place,
where I am given so much space,
when I am searching I might find,
the rhyme and reason of any kind.*

*My secret place, no one can find.
That secret place lays in my mind.*

– Written by Kevin Moss (2012)
Source: www.poemhunter.com

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Chances are that you are holding onto your old devices and gadgets because they still work and you don't find it economical to pay for an upgrade.

Well, think about how much time you've wasted instead, trying to troubleshoot and fix them, the 'opportunity cost'.

And don't forget the negative effect it has on your mood!

System crashes and data losses close to an important deadline can cause more damage than it is worth.

What to do: Update your computer antivirus software and OS (operating system) and conduct regular maintenance checks on your devices. Keep important information backed up at intervals.

5 AUGMENT YOUR TECHNOLOGY

The other thing to consider about your home office technology is the additional features that some of your gadgets, devices and software have to offer.

After working for a while, you should have an idea of what might be missing in your home office that would significantly facilitate your work.

What to do: Stop procrastinating and begin by listing down those features that will allow you to get things done more efficiently.

For instance, if you're a graphic designer, perhaps a second monitor will help speed things up.

6 SIMPLIFY PROCESSES

Have you complicated your home office and work processes so much that it has become too overwhelming to work anymore?

If so, it's time to go back to basics – simplify.



Remember that the key to an organised office is efficiency, and the more things you have around, the harder it is to keep everything in order.

A typical disorganised office is when you have difficulties finding where you keep your documents.

A workspace organised in too complex a manner may seem neat on the surface but will cause a lot of problems for sorting or filing as there are too many categories.

What to do: Keep things clean and minimal. When you are overly organised, you will tend to procrastinate keeping your workspace neat because it's too time-consuming and tedious. Eventually, you get clutter. This not only applies to the physical layout of your work area; it is the same in your computer.

Sort for easy access. The general rule is to keep the desktop as clear as possible with only a few files or apps that you're working on.

Maintain a minimalistic organisation and a clean desk (keep ugly wires out of sight with these gadgets) so your mind won't wander from one thing to another.

You'll feel less stressed and less distracted from your task.

7 EXPAND YOUR WORKSPACE OR STORAGE SYSTEM

Are your documents piling up because of your prospering business? If it is, it's time to consider expanding the physical space of your home office.

The rule of thumb for any room or space is the lesser clutter you have, the fewer your distractions will be.

If you have the tendency to leave things lying around, a pile of clutter will form before you even realise it.

However, when you increase the amount of physical space, it will take longer for that to happen.

The extra space will also make your workspace look less cramped and hence, neater.

What to do: What if you have no room for expansion? You should consider investing in some fine storage solutions such as a filing cabinet, shelves, files and folders.

Sure, the room may still look cramped with cabinets and shelves, but not seeing piles of documents when you're working may just be good enough to calm your nerves for the rest of the day.

Of course, if you don't want a hard time finding these documents when you need them, you must label them accordingly and have periodic filing sessions to manage your paperwork.

8 INCORPORATE PERSONAL TOUCH AND INSPIRATION

In spite of tip No 1, there should be some leeway in what you can place in your workspace for that personal touch and inspiration to an otherwise, sterile office environment.

Note that the purpose of these items

or design is to help you sustain that positive mood and energy to work.

They can include anything: decor, plants, pets, photographs or posters. If you're feeling a sense of dread working in your home office, ask yourself what would inspire you to keep you going?

It could be your family, your kids, your goals, your favourite art pieces, the scenery outside your window, or even the mere sight of your favourite colour.

What to do: If you require a lot of creative thinking for your work, then be sure to put in place things that can help you spawn ideas, such as a sketchpad to doodle on or catch ideas that suddenly pop up.

The decor itself can have a huge impact on your mood, as does the furniture, so put some thought into them as well.

Incorporate a certain style or theme for your home office that you can identify with. If you're going to spend some time in your home office, you'll want to make sure you have pleasant surroundings to work in.

EXPERIMENTATION IS KEY

In some ways, an organised and productive home office takes a lot of experimentation and a bit of luck before you can get it just right. You will find yourself experimenting with new technology, organisation, processes and designs, and balancing it with your budget for the perfect home office.

Though it may be time consuming, it is still an enjoyable process to observe how your home office evolves. Have fun!

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