9 Tips for Creating a Productive Work from Home Space

While a dedicated home office with a window, door, and little distractions would be an ideal work from home setting, it's not always possible, or necessary, to establish a productive work space.

Text by Sherry Moeller

A cozy nook, a stylish bedroom desk, a favorite chair, or a dining room or kitchen table might all provide what one needs to accomplish daily tasks while working from home. Some essentials, such as good lighting including natural and task lamps, a comfortable chair and device connectivity, establish the basic setup, while calming elements within an uncluttered environment set the tone. Keep a regular routine, too, by preparing for the day as if you were headed to the company office. Also, remember to stand up, stretch, and take a quick walk or exercise at varying intervals to reinvigorate the body and mind.

Tracy Morris of Tracy Morris Design offers nine tips for working from home, including how to maintain healthy boundaries between home office and home life. We've also included images from a variety of prominent designers to help inspire you to create your own gracious work space.

1. Create a Makeshift Office

Tracy Morris designed this kitchen with a second island, which doubles as a work station. Photo by Greg Powers

Create a clean and uncluttered environment. Put away any papers or items that you aren't actively working on, as a clear desk will lead to a clear mind and increase productivity.

2. Upgrade Your Lighting

Josh Hildreth loves the history and storage options of antique slant-top desks used at home, as shown in this bedroom he designed. Photo by Stacy Zarin Goldberg

Add a lamp to your desk. Leave behind the harsh fluorescents of a traditional office and add in warm task lighting, which illuminates your desk better than overhead lights and helps prevent eye strain.

3. Utilize Natural Elements

Keira St. Claire of Anthony Wilder designed a stylish seating area tucked in a bright bay window with adjacent tables and shelves as an alternate work from home or reading space. Photo by Angie Seckinger

Work by a window if you can. If your home allows it, working near natural light assists with staying focused.

4. Find a Cozy Chair

GTM Architects designed this living room with a desk under the windows to provide a work from home space. Photo courtesy of GTM Architects

Make your chair as comfortable as possible. We don't always have the luxuries of a perfectly ergonomic desk chair at home. Adding a small pillow for lumbar support or layering a blanket along the back of an existing chair for added softness can go a long way, especially when sitting for a length of time.

5. Add a Relaxing Accessory

This guest bedroom designed by Pamela Harvey does double duty with a side table with chair as a night stand for a cozy spot to work from home. Photo by Stacy Zarin Goldberg

Light your favorite scented candle. When times are stressful, lighting a delightfully smelling candle can calm the mind. Even when you can't go to the spa, you can make your home office smell like one.

6. Tune Out and Tune in to Tasks

This dedicated office space designed by Tracy Morris offers natural light, secondary seating and storage options. Photo by Greg Powers

Play your favorite music. Music can lift your spirits and help you tune out distractions.

7. Make Use of Standing Up

By surrounding yourself with what you love, as shown in the home office/library with a variety of working areas designed by Anthony Wilder, you can create a productive work from home environment. Photo by Paul Burk

Stack a few large coffee table books on your desk or on a table in a different area of the home to create a standing desk, especially if you're missing the one at your other office.

8. Create More Than One Working Space

This dining nook designed by Annie Elliott offers a table and a desk with chairs, plus a window seat as work from home options. Photo by Jenn Verrier

Move to a secondary location in the house or to a different chair in the office for a brief period to read a report or article, to stretch your legs, and for a change of scenery.

9. Clean Up The Clutter

A writing desk with lamp and a comfortable chair with lumbar pillow are key to a productive work from home space designed by Kelley Proxmire. Photo by Kip Dawkins

When working from home, it is easy to blur the lines between your work and home life so set clear boundaries.