

The Home Office

A Powerhouse of Productivity

Make your home office your powerhouse of productivity. Whether your work is action-packed or introspective, full- or part-time, organize and arrange it to enhance your discipline, creativity, and success.

Desk Placement

No matter where your home office is located, take the reins of success in hand by arranging the room to serve you in every detail. Of primary importance is the placement of your desk. The desk's ideal power position is where you have a perfect view of the door from your chair, a pleasant view out a window, and a solid wall behind you. This gives you complete support from the back and a commanding view from the front. (Notice how top executives never sit with their backs to the door.)

Claiming the power position in your home office often means positioning your desk or work table like an island in the room, rather than pushing it against a wall—so your desk should be attractive from all angles, without exposed nests of wires or unfinished sides. Choose a desk designed with an opening behind a front “modesty” panel where wires remain out of sight and the front of the desk shows well. Or, enclose wires in a tube designed to hold them (available at any office supply store) and run them safely out of harm's way under area rugs or existing carpeting. When possible, install electrical outlets in the middle of the floor so that you won't have to run wires over to a wall.

Making the Very Best of Your Location

While it's ideal to have a view of both door and window in your home office, a view of the door is most important. If you lose a good window view in order to see the door, hang a mirror to reflect the view while you're at your desk. If a window is directly behind your desk, enhance your sense of stability and protection by placing something substantial—such as a large plant or credenza—between you and the window. If you cannot bear to give up your window view, install a mirror so that you can see the door from your desk.

Because mirrors enlarge and brighten a room, they activate energy and are well placed in a home office. A strategically placed mirror can also improve a room when you can't move your office furniture to gain a view of the door. Use a free-standing or wall-mounted mirror so that it reflects the door behind you when you are seated at your desk. Small compact or shaving mirrors also work well, since their purpose is not necessarily to

reflect *you*, but any motion occurring behind you. Art with reflective glass can also be used to catch any movement behind you.

Ideally, mirrors reflect harmonious images, so make sure that the reflection isn't doubling unpleasant views. Improve the room by uncluttering the space and adding items such as flowers, art, and attractive window treatments.

Furnishing Your Home Office

When furnishing your home office, as with all rooms, keep stress and irritability to a minimum by choosing furniture with rounded corners, or positioning things with sharp corners out of the traffic flow. You can also turn furniture with sharp corners at a diagonal in the room or store them in closets.

The ideal desk shape is rectangular with soft corners, while conference tables are best when circular or oval, as they sustain an active flow of harmony and equality around the table.

Although your desk's color and material is a very personal choice, most people work best at a surface where white paper contrasts just right. Paper tends to disappear on pure white surfaces and contrast dramatically on black surfaces. Either extreme can cause eyestrain. Clear glass desks seem to disappear beneath paper, which can also strain the eyes. Most wooden or medium-toned surfaces provide the right amount of contrast without visual strain.

Think of your desk chair as your throne and choose the most comfortable one possible. This cannot be emphasized enough. Your capacity to produce and prosper is considerably enhanced by a great work chair. Treat yourself to an ergonomically correct chair that has excellent lumbar support and adjustable height. Always sit in a chair before you buy it—that's the only way to know if you've truly found your throne.

Getting and Staying Organized

Being organized in your home office is not an option—it's mandatory. Optimal productivity cannot occur in a cluttered or chaotic space. Become the "samurai of clutter," and slice through any tendency to pile up extraneous catalogs, magazines, newsletters, and papers in your office. This is crucial to your creativity, energy level, and ability to attract new opportunities. I have seen many home offices that doubled as chaotic storerooms or were piled with years' worth of junk mail and papers. In every case, the chaos had ground productivity to a halt. To be effective, your office needs to be returned to order on a regular basis so that the newest projects and creative endeavors have a place to flourish.

If you find yourself hip-deep in chaos and can't seem to pull yourself out, don't despair! Hire a Feng Shui consultant who specializes in organizing space to identify your personal work style and help you organize your workspace accordingly. With or without the help of such a person in your life, it's critical to discover your personal work style so that you can maintain an organized and clutter-free home office.

Office Sensuality

To personalize your home office, turn to your five senses. Remember, your office is your worldly battery where you plug in and produce! You probably aren't going to be "juiced" by looking at leftover art, mismatched furniture, or drab colors all day. Give each of your senses serious consideration. Decide what sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and feelings elicit power, creativity, energy, and resourcefulness in you.

One client chose a rosewood desk and paintings of wild horses as visual enhancements. He draws inspiration from Vivaldi and other classical music, drinks French roast coffee from a china cup, and loves his big leather chair. Another client works in the ethereal glow of lavender walls, and plenty of natural light. She listens to New Age music, drinks spring water from a crystal goblet, and sits in a deep purple ergonomically correct chair. Her husband's home office is "clothed" in the natural look of beech furniture, golden walls, and framed posters of beautiful scenery. He drinks his green tea from an earthenware mug, sits in a high-backed office chair, and listens to the gurgling sound of a small desktop waterfall.

Surround yourself with the things that keep you inspired, creative, and productive. Your home office is the place where you manifest great things in the world. Make it your powerhouse. You'll be richly rewarded when you do.

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