

Setting Up Your Home Office

Whether you already have a home business or are thinking about setting one up, consider this: your home office has to have most of the same stuff that a big office has. Not just everything in a typical individual's office, but also what's in a supply room, storage area, computer center and mail room.

As a result, space is at a premium in a typical home office and productivity is at stake. That's why you should consider these strategies for creating a workspace that's organized, attractive and efficient.

1. Position your workstation or desk first. This is where you spend most of your time-be sure to maintain a lot of space around your workstation so you won't feel cramped.

To avoid new wiring or messy extension cords, your workstation should be close to both electrical outlets and a telephone jack.

You should also factor in personal preferences such natural lighting and airflow into your desk placement.

2. Think big. Find places for other large furniture such as a work table or conference table. You don't want to try squeezing something that large into your design late in the game.

3. Work outward from your desk. When placing other furniture and equipment, consider how often you'll use these items during a typical workday-place those most frequently used close at hand.

For most, the computer is the most vital piece of equipment and should be on your desk or within arm's length. Its placement will also dictate where you place peripherals such as your printer, scanner and drives. So it's best to treat your computer and everything that's hooked up to it as a single entity.

Divide your files into two categories-active and reference. Keep active files close at hand, in your desk or a nearby filing cabinet. Keep infrequently used files out of the way-in a far corner of the office or even in another part of your home.

4. Work upward from the floor. Shelving, cabinets and bookcases have a small "footprint," but they can provide floor-to-ceiling space for your office necessities.

Similarly, pre-configured technology stations are available that have a small footprint, but will consolidate your CPU, monitor, printer, keyboard, scanner and supplies. Some also come with built-in electrical outlets/surge protectors and wire management systems.

5. Review and revise. Even after you've followed these guidelines, it's quite possible the layout of your new office will still be less than perfect. Step back and see where improvements can be made.

Is computer equipment overwhelming your desk? You can add extra work surface with a credenza or a second desk-or by switching to a space-saving flat-screen monitor or even a laptop.

If you use a laptop, consider WiFi capabilities for wireless Internet and network access from virtually anywhere inside your home... or out.

You might also want to try an all-in-one printer/copier/scanner solution-it'll save you lots of money and space.

Have enough room to maneuver? Make sure you have clear access to everything in the office and plenty of space to maneuver your chair.

Are wires running all over the place? Wire clips are available to manage wires and prevent them from tangling. You may also benefit from a wireless keyboard and mouse, as well as a USB hub. There are dozens of solutions specifically designed to maximize the comfort and efficiency of office space. And, as your local office products supplier, we can provide you with the ones best suited for your home office.