

WORK

HORSE

HOW TO MAKE YOUR HOME OFFICE WORK FOR YOU.
BY CHRIS PLANTAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY VICTORIA CAMPBELL

RENOVATION BY HENDEL HOMES |
INTERIORS BY MARTIN PATRICK 31 OFFICE
SUPPLIES BY GOOD OFFICE DAY

THE HOME OFFICE IS NO LONGER THE NOOK IN THE KITCHEN or the leftover space in the mudroom, but rather a necessary place in which to conduct the world's — and your life's — business. It used to be fun to catch up on work on the living room sofa until it became a regular occurrence.

The home office is top of mind again, and everyone is weighing in on what inspires them and how to avoid workspace gaffes. I like to look at it as not just a room, but a lifestyle. Whether it's an everyday office, an occasional meeting venue or a brainstorming spot, a well-designed, well-equipped space can inspire creativity and promote healthy habits.

The pandemic hasn't so much changed as it has confirmed how we will live and work in the future. It's made us focus on our workspaces and come to realize that our home offices are not just a place to get things done but indeed a reflection of who we are. New York City designer Vicente Wolf, who's seen it all, advises: "Straighten the pictures. Edit your bookcase. And please, get rid of the obvious plastic floral arrangements." With that said, let's discuss some home office edits.

These days, many households have multiple people working from home at the same time. Add in distance learning, and you might feel like your abode is a members-only coworking collective. Amy Hendel of Hendel Homes is seeing a trend of multiple work areas within a residence. "Clients are asking for two to three offices in a home, with dedicated spaces for everyone," she explains. "A room that can be closed off is essential for the hustle and bustle of busy family life."

Those who are handling video calls all day need to consider special sound and lighting needs as well. "Our clients who hold international positions are asking for lighting that emulates the sun at all times of the day," she adds, "or the ability to have multiple screens with different city skylines for backgrounds."

Your home office should feel like a place of inspiration as well as a reflection of your personal style, passions and aspirations. This is one area where home definitely beats out the corporate setting, where your colleagues would decorate with quirky calendars and fake plants. If you're a visual person, use your walls for mood boards. This can be achieved with unique surface applications and adds design details to otherwise plain walls. It's not just about decor; the focus is dually on productivity. Form can influence function in a way that truly impacts your work.

Nothing looks more depressing than the dead end desk or the mesh-backed chair. It's the quickest way to feel like you're back in a college dorm. Opt for a large desk or table and position it in the room strategically. Take time to consider your background as it is conveyed through your computer's eye. Larger work surfaces provide ample space for multiple projects and room for a second chair if needed. Find a task chair that's comfortable all day yet remains stylish and coordinated with your space.

Be discerning about the items on your desk and ensure it's easy to tidy up come close of business. Make it part of your mindfulness practice to declutter so you can walk into your office each morning with a fresh perspective that equips you for a productive day. And make wise choices with your supplies. My new line of desk accessories, Good Office Day, is sustainably sourced and easy to recycle or compost. It lets you feel good about your notebooks, binders, folios and file folders.

Finally, it's more important than ever to have boundaries. There needs to be a conscious boundary between our workday and our time off — which is so difficult with the office literally steps away. It takes discipline, well-designed, multi-functional spaces and thoughtful accessories. Trust me: Your soul will thank you. ☺

