

# Interiors

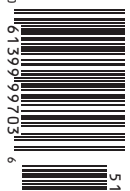
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## MAKING ROOM ●●● BY KRISTA SALTER



# No Place Like Home

PLANNING YOUR HOME OFFICE PROPERLY CAN MAKE GOING TO WORK A PLEASURE!

As a small business owner, I had to dedicate a room in my house for my home office. I chose the smallest room as it was the easiest to give up, but I soon realized that it was a room that I used more than any other. The office is small, but it can pack a punch because of its thought-out good design and smart use of space. When planning my home office, there were many elements to keep in mind to provide a productive and organized environment. Yes, decor was a significant consideration, but function turned out to be of the utmost importance when creating my office. Let me help shed some light on planning your home office, as I have learned a thing or two from furnishing my own.

### Flow

Regardless of the size of your office, there must be a good sense of flow in the room. If possible, centre your desk in the middle of the room. This allows you to face the door, offers space behind your desk for additional storage and opens the possibility of meeting chairs in front of the desk. You want to have at least 30" on all sides

of your desk to allow enough space for walkways. And as a bonus, it looks great from a decorating perspective. If you do not have room to centre your desk, I would choose the wall that has the best vantage point (ie. a window, or being able to look out the door). It seems insignificant, but when you spend hours in your office, you don't want to be staring at a wall all day long!

### Working Spaces

Your desk is the main hub for work, but it is ideal to have additional table tops for you to spread out your work and resources. Seek out a desk that is at least 60"x30" or bigger, if your space allows. When sourcing a desk, try to find one with some storage space. A pencil drawer can go a long way, even if it's slim and shallow. I find that I gravitate towards unconventional desks that don't look like traditional office furniture. I prefer when they have details such as trestle-style legs or something to make it stand out. My desk is Parsons Style which allows one to view the legs from all angles. This style of desk also helps to keep an open, airy feeling rather than closing in the space with heavy legs and aprons. It depends on the impression you want your office to make. A lawyer may want a heavy desk to suggest grounding and trust, while a web designer, who mainly uses a computer to house and store all their work, may want a minimal desk that suggests innovation or progressive thinking. One tip is to consider how you will work on your desk and what colour you choose. I use markers and pens often, which I did not consider when buying a white tabletop. Needless to say, my desk has some stains and signs of wear from my creative and perhaps less than careful nature.

Behind my desk, I have a console table I use frequently. I can





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float between the desk and the table, depending on what I have on the go. The console table also houses my printer, a cork board above, additional stationary needs and a file holder for my current clients. I often switch between these two desks, back and forth between my computer and office supplies.

### Files and Bookshelves

Every business comes with its set of paperwork and filing, so study what you need accessible to you each day. Filing cabinets can be concealed as furniture pieces, or built into a credenza, adding more table top space with which to work. However, if you are tight for space, a vertical file system will be your best solution. Bookshelves are also great for taking advantage of vertical wall space as they give the opportunity to house books, catalogs, baskets or bins filled with office supplies and odds and ends.

### Your Inspiring Office Environment

Function aside, you will want and need to have a space that you are looking forward to working in each day. Creating the perfect office atmosphere will make you feel motivated and productive. When it comes to creating your inspiring space, think of places you enjoy working in; do you often go to the local coffee shop to work? Do you like a cubicle style work atmosphere? Do you enjoy a more informal space for work to be done? Find out what inspires you to work and build on that thought. If you want your space to feel more like a cafe, add in soft seating, a small round meeting table, lots of artwork and make sure to have some ambient music playing. If a more formal work style is your preference, perhaps buy a full office suite to create a cohesive look and a heavy leather chair to sink into while you work. Truly, creating your dream office space is as important as its function. In my office, my inspiration was to have a calming and easy place to work that was neutral in colour and style. Being that I work with fabrics and colour most of my day, I wanted my walls and furniture to be neutral so they would not fight with my work. To create interest, I have hung loads of artwork and combined a mixture of mid-century modern pieces with contemporary ones. My favourite piece in the room is my cow hide rug. It helps play up the casualness that I enjoy about my office. It is a place I truly enjoy spending time. I find that adding small details like photos of my husband and family and even a plant helps create a space that reflects me!



## Lighting

Working from a home office allows one to escape the dreaded fluorescent lighting that most traditional office spaces use. Although those utilitarian lighting systems aren't pretty, they do serve its purpose. To avoid eye strain or headaches, make sure you have adequate lighting in your home office. Spending long hours at a desk or on a computer is difficult on the eyes. Make sure that you have plenty of ceiling mounted lights such as spot lights or a light fixture that offers a significant amount of illumination. Your light fixture does not necessarily need to be only functional either. Take the opportunity to pick out an interesting fixture that will complement your office decor; a chandelier, drum shade fixture or an organic multi-light fixture could create some interest in your space. Also, consider a task lamp for your desk if you feel as though you need additional lighting for reading or writing. Desk lamps can break up the functional nature of a desk and add some varying height to the otherwise flat surface.

## Organizing Your Office

Organizing your office and keeping it that way is often a difficult concept. More often than not, files are piled, papers are stacked and you can't find the time to address either. This is where having the right tools for the job really matters. Think about using your wall space for organizational needs, like hanging a cork board or hanging files. Purchase tabletop organizers from stores such as Staples or Ikea to keep your files and papers from getting mixed up. Additionally, your office supplies will need to have a place to go as well; consider where you will house all your paper, pens and inks. Add additional pieces of furniture, such as a credenza, for this type of storage, or transform the closet in your room into an organized oasis. Install simple shelving to accommodate bankers' boxes, papers or stationary supplies. This also allows you to have additional storage for unsightly office resources such as catalogues and other binders that are not pleasing to have on display.

The key to a home office is organization, productivity and flow. If your office does not function well, neither will you. In order to create a great home office, you need to accommodate all your daily needs with ease. Once you have all the functionality worked out, then the decor execution can begin. Being that we spend a significant amount of time in our offices, have fun with your decor. Create a space that excites you to work each day; a space that inspires success!

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