Getting the Most out of Your Home — Part 2 — The Home Office

With so many people telecommuting or working from home, a dedicated home office can become a huge asset. So, today we're looking at home offices in our continuing series — Getting the Most out of Your Home.

If you are setting up a home office- whether for personal needs or your actual career — the first consideration should be to find a dedicated space just for the office. Don't blend the workplace with the rest of your home's personal or entertainment space. That means, it can't be a desk and extra chair tucked into the corner of your bedroom or kitchen.

That leads us to tip #1 in creating your home office. Pick a good location and organize it efficiently.

Since you will probably spend many hours in your home office, especially if you operate a home-based business or are frequent telecommuter, give yourself a decent size space that is away from distractions of the home, such as kids coming and going.

You don't want to be cramped into a small space that is close to the family activities, gives you claustrophobia and/or reduces your productivity. Adequate space is also a huge consideration if you have clients who visit your home office. Make sure you have adequate room to meet with them without invading your home's personal space.

Also, make sure you organize your home office as efficiently as possible. If you tend to stack papers and make piles, get a nice basket or designate one desk drawer for those "to-do" list items, miscellaneous papers, notes, etc. If space is

tight, think about adding floating shelves on the walls to get papers and office equipment off the desk.

My next favorite tip is to think about the positioning of your desk so that you have a view and aren't bothered by glare from a window or overhead light. When you take a break from staring at your computer, you want to make sure you aren't looking at a blank wall. Looking out a window is great, but if that's not an option, consider hanging a pretty picture above the desk.

Along those same lines, make sure that your office has plenty of light — whether it's from natural light coming in the window or a desk lamp. That will help reduce eye strain and headaches. Proper lighting also helps to keep your energy and productivity up, so make sure you have artificial lighting available for those short winter days or when you work long into the night.

Let's finish up with one more quick tip when creating a home office: Paint the walls a color you love — a color that gets you going in work mode. That could be a bright color or a calming shade. It's all up to you.

When you take the time to think about your needs before setting up your office, you'll love heading there each day and won't be bothered by needless distractions.

See our entire Series on Getting the Most out of Your Home

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