

Creating an office in your home

Do you constantly lug home children or your spouse? Or are you work from the office, only to discover you have to vie for kitchen or dining room table space with your one of a growing number of people who are thinking of going into business for yourself and working

out of your home on a permanent basis?

In either case, you need a place where you can have lots of peace, privacy and plenty of room to work — without having to worry about getting butter stains or sticky fingerprints all over your important papers. The perfect way to achieve this is with a home office.

You can create your own office by either designating an existing room within your home for this purpose, or by creating a brand new space. Once you're all set up, you'll have fewer distractions and

you'll be able to easily access everything you need. You'll find that this will help you get your work done much more quickly and efficiently.

If you're considering using existing space for your home office — such as a family room or spare bedroom — your main concern will be how to furnish it, so that it's practical, comfortable and attractive.

If the office is only for occasional use, you can incorporate a lot of extra homey touches. But try to avoid choosing an area of your home where most of the household activity occurs — like a room just off the kitchen or living room. Also try and choose a room with a good, solid door so that you can shut out any disruptive sounds.

Basement or attic

If you have room available in your basement or attic, you may want to consider renovating this usable space into an office — providing your budget will accommodate such a project. These areas of the home are ideal for office space because they are generally far enough away from the regular hustle and bustle of family life to afford the appropriate amount of peace and privacy you need.

These areas also convey a sense of "separateness" from the rest of your home, so you won't be as readily tempted to wander through the house if you become distracted or bored.

Garage an option

If you have a garage but rarely use it, you may want to explore this option as possible office space — particularly if you plan to work at home on a permanent basis. By

using your garage, you have a separate entrance for business clients and contacts. This also provides you with a working environment that is totally separate from your home — but close enough to it for quick accessibility.

Keep in mind however, that with any type of major renovation project — like an attic, basement or a garage, it's essential to check your local building code to see if you'll be able to get a permit for your plans.

Also seek professional input to see how much this type of undertaking will actually cost you. You might be surprised at how quickly costs can build up, so it's imperative to check first.

What to put in your home office

If your home office is only for occasional use, you can incorporate a lot of extra personal touches designed specifically with your own comfort and tastes in mind. Or, if the room you choose also does double duty as a spare bedroom or den, your choice of decor shouldn't matter as much.

However, if your home office is going to be your permanent place of work, you'll probably want to create a more professional setting where you can meet with business associates and/or clients.

When choosing furnishings for your home office, keep comfort and durability in mind. Good lighting is another essential element to think about when planning.


Check out furniture showrooms and specialty shops to see what types of furnishings would suit you best. If you're unsure, try talking to a design consultant.

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1. A typical Ontario family of four requires approximately 236 litres of hot water per day.
2. Unit costs are the average for the province of Ontario as published in the 1993 Ontario Ministry of Energy "Home Heating & Cooling - A Consumer's Guide".
3. GST is included in the pricing.

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