

# HOME AND GARDEN

## Make room for your home office without sacrificing living space

Are you comfortable in your home office? If you're like many, you're trying to use a crowded desk in the corner of your kitchen or den. If you've ever wished you had a home office, but didn't think you had the room, here's how to squeeze one in without squeez-

ing yourself. A properly made-up room can serve a dual purpose, whether it's a den, a guest room or a home office. The trick is to make the room professional enough for your daily work environment and cozy enough for everyday living. Here are some of the simple ways to find the balance you need on a budget you can afford.

**Versatile furniture.** Need a sofa-like spot to relax on, a bed to accommodate overnight guests and a place for business visitors to sit? Futon furniture is the answer. Converting easily from sitting to sleeping space, today's futon frames are available in many styles.

**Hide the evidence.** To give the room a more-at-home feel, de-emphasize some of your office materials. Convert a two-drawer file cabinet into a table by covering it with fabric that drapes to the floor. With a simple lamp and some magazines on top, no one will know your files are hidden underneath the table. Or, hide your work area completely with an armoire that contains a hidden pullout desk. Not only does the desk/armoire serve a dual purpose, but it gives the room a tidy look when closed.

**The latest electronics.** The newest office electronics can be less invasive when you're off the clock. Try a quieter fax machine or a voice-mail system.

**Personal and professional.** Give your home office a personal touch. Family photos make great decorations. Natural light and live plants give a home office a refreshing feel. Find the right amount of professionalism that meets your business needs and then make the space a livable part of your home.

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