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## **Do Your HOMEwork!**

Like millions of Americans, you're bringing your office home. Now that you've mastered the hi-tech world of home computers, it's time to get that monitor off the kitchen table and those files out of the laundry basket. Luckily, you don't have to face the home office dilemma alone. Regardless of the size of your workspace, our member stores have a vast assortment of home office products that are both functional and beautiful. Working from home has its advantages, no dress code and no commute, but the first step is designing and organizing a home office that works for you.

When it comes to creating a home office, commercial-looking pieces aren't your only option. There are plenty of fine furnishings that can provide comfortable workspaces too. If you're a part-timer who's short on space, consider a simple writing or secretary desk. Whether your style preference is clean and contemporary or more fanciful French, a writing desk can easily serve many functions. A delicately scaled piece can tuck neatly into a corner of a room or be placed diagonally in an corner for asymmetric drama.

If space is a consideration, consider one of today's attractive office armoires. Available in a variety of sizes and finishes, these pieces open their doors to reveal writing surfaces, as well as plenty of specially sized niches for computers and other must-haves. When you're through working for the day, you can close the doors as you would in any other office. Armoires also work well in extra rooms with a sleeper sofa to provide both office space and extra sleeping accommodations for guests.

If you're the full-time traditionalist, there's perhaps no better option than the full-fledged executive desk. This age old favorite is taking on a few new twists. Though given the same library look, today's versions are more apt to accommodate up-to-date equipment.

Careful planning is the key to having a flexible, efficient and multipurpose setup. After all, the quality of your work may depend on it!

## Choosing an Area for Your Office

Think about the following when searching for an area to suit your needs:

- How much time will you spend in the office? Full-time businesses require a dedicated office area designed for comfort and function.
- What type of work will you be doing? An interior designer, for example, needs a lot of flat work area to spread out plans and books. On the other hand, a web designer needs much less desk space.
- Will the office center around the computer system? Equip the area to handle a computer desk or table.
- Will customers or vendors be visiting you? If so, you need a door with direct access to the outside to avoid taking visitors on an unsolicited tour of your home.
- How much privacy will you need? Less outside disturbance equals more productivity.
- Can the area be closed off by doors, screens or a curtain that can be tied back? Being able to close off your office from other parts of the house helps to separate your business from your personal life.

## **Lighting Your Home Office (sidebar)**

Pay careful attention to the lighting in your office. Poor lighting can cause headaches, double vision and fatigue. When planning your office lighting, remember these simple but important guidelines:

- The home office needs a good general light source. If you spend eight hours a day in your office, you will want light that is long lasting and energy-efficient. A smart choice would be to use color-improved warm fluorescents in the ceiling fixture. Warm fluorescents reduce the bluish cast associated with fluorescent lighting. Halogen bulbs are also cost-effective and render colors well.

- Light the wall behind the computer to reduce eyestrain. Place light sources beside or above (never in front of) the terminal. The light needs to be at least the height of the monitor. To avoid glare, position the computer screen away from windows or other light sources. If that is not possible, use blinds or curtains to control the light.
- A desk lamp with adjustable arms and a three-way bulb may prove practical. You can position the light where you need it and you can adjust the level of the light to suit the particular task. Place the lamp to your left if you are right-handed and to your right if you are left-handed. The bulbs in the task lighting for deskwork or reading shine about three times brighter than bulbs in the rest of the room.
- If your home office includes a comfortable chair for reading, use a floor lamp with a three-way bulb to provide an appropriate level of light.