

A Creative Space

Interior designer

Charlotte Starling looks at how to create a home office that will help boost your productivity

It's easy to let a home office slide off the bottom of the decorating to-do list. But how your office space is arranged and decorated can greatly impact productivity.

The luxury of a home office is that you are at home. Don't be afraid to forgo typical office furniture in favour of a style that blends with the rest of your home. A simple streamlined desk can be accessorized with non-officey stuff so it remains in tune with the rest of the room.

Nowadays technology and gadgets are increasingly miniature in size, which means we don't necessarily need a separate office or study. Any neglected nook can be used. Use a few space tricks to create privacy and peace. Try an open-backed bookcase as a room divider, or a strategically positioned decorative screen. If you have high ceilings you could try building a platform as an office area. Make a guest room that doubles as a home office appear more welcoming by concealing files or equipment inside an antique armoire or with a curtain made from vintage fabric.

The big secret to working happily at home is well-thought-out storage and plenty of it. Neatly stacked boxes are a moveable and practical solution. Piled high or in a long row is smartest. Metal shelving designed for catering and industrial use, school lockers and filing cabinets are also alternatives to mass-produced units and add character to your interior.

Avoid clutter pileups by placing another work surface near your main desk. This keeps your computer area clean and clear, and provides dedicated space where you



Giant Sharpener Desk Tidy £19.99 Cuckooland, Poundbury, 01305 755621 (cuckooland.com)



Office painted in All White by Farrow & Ball

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can spread out. It's also great for stepping away from the computer every once in a while.

Avoid blanket overhead lighting. Maximise natural light but avoid glare. Fluorescent strip lighting in particular is bad news and proven to cause headaches. A good, clear task-light like a small spot or angle-poise is important.

Finally, surround yourself with things you love. Hide anything ugly like tech equipment or bulky folders and give favourite colours, artwork, photos, plants and personal items pride of place. ■

About Charlotte

Charlotte Starling is Creative Director of Velvet & Dash Interiors based near Dorchester. A keen supporter of local businesses, she works with Dorset-based designers and artists



to offer styling and sourcing services for the home. Find out more at velvet-dash.com or call 01300 320 657.



Cupertino, a work desk with an integrated sound system. The speakers connect to portable devices through Bluetooth without external cables. Available in black or white. Desk from £795/speakers: £279 Bo Concept, Bournemouth, 01202 587744 (boconcept.co.uk)



1930's Shoelast Bookends £90 a pair Sharland & Lewis Home + Garden, Wimborne (sharlandandlewis.com)



Gisela Graham Natural Wood Box from £13. The Contemporary Home, 02392 469400 (tch.net)



Large Labrador Print Memo Board £65 The Stylish Dog Company, 01483 810036 (thestylishdogcompany.com)



Retro Telephone 746 in blue, red and cream £45, Cuckooland, Poundbury (cuckooland.com) 01305 755621



Beaucoup Chest of Drawers gives ample storage with its 30 draws £1191. Sweet Pea & Willow (sweetpeaandwillow.com) 0845 257 2627



Colour Masterclass with Farrow & Ball

Colour can influence mood dramatically so it is important to choose the right schemes for a creative work space. Take into account when you spend time in this room, as the lighting will change depending on the time of day. Dark colours create focus and allow you to become completely absorbed in your work. Using a strong colour such as Stiffkey Blue, Mole's Breath or Down Pipe will give a sense of security when used on all four walls, for maximum effect paint the ceiling too! Contrast this, with good lighting and pops of colour like St Giles Blue or Yellowcake on accessories.

For a soothing scheme that will create a relaxed atmosphere, use neutrals like Wexet or All White. Pastels like Borrowed Light or Calamine are refreshing and calming, promoting a sense of well-being and inspiration.

Sarah Cole, Director farrow-ball.com



Karenza & Co Recycled Home Office range uses 100% recycled waste cotton material and eco-friendly dyes. Available in mint, rose, blue and white. Prices from £3.95 - £12.50. Karenza & Co, 01252 621145 (karenzaandco.com)

Jacobsen Industrial Style Swan Chair in brown leather £670.00 Sweetpea & Willow, 0845 257 2627 (sweetpeaandwillow.com)

