

How to Craft a Truly Perfect Home Office, According to Designers

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Designing a home office is no easy task. Because if you get something wrong, you don't just see it, you feel it—and you feel it every weekday from 9-to-5. A great home office is comfortable enough to spend all day in, minimal enough to keep you focused, and ideally, interesting enough to get your creative juices flowing.

Meet the Expert

- Jennifer J. Morris is an interior designer and the principal at JMorris Design.
- Jenny Kramer is a senior designer at Caroline Brackett Studio of Design.
- Ginger Curtis is the owner of and principal at Urbanology Designs.
- Betsy Moyer is a co-founder of and interior designer at Retreat, an experiential design firm.

01 Put Function First

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PURE SALT INTERIORS

Designing a home office may sound daunting. Thankfully, the first step is simple: think about how you like to work.

“I start with understanding how the client needs the space to function,” Jenny Kramer, senior designer at Caroline Brackett Studio of Design, says. Ask yourself questions like: How do I like to work? What distracts me? And when am I most productive?

“For a home office, especially, function shouldn’t take a backseat to aesthetics,” Kramer says. “The two must work in tandem.” So, focus on what you need from the space. *Then*, think about how you want it to look.

02 Build the Storage Set-Up You Need

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REENA SOTROPA

Most jobs require access to some kind of equipment—whether that be bulky printers and copiers, or sleek notepads and pens. But odds are, you don't need all that equipment all the time.

“What type of equipment do you use in your job on a regular basis?” Kramer asks. “And what equipment and supplies do you need that you might not need full-time access to?”

Once you've answered these questions, you can craft a storage setup that meets your needs. One designer favorite is to build custom shelves and cabinetry.

“I love how custom built-ins house everything the client needs,” Kramer says. “If thought out and designed correctly, they can make workflow much smoother.”

03 Keep Distractions to a Minimum

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LECLAIR DECOR

When designing your home office, you want to set yourself up for success. And part of that means anticipating—and avoiding—the pain points you're likely to experience.

"I often see people layout the furniture in a way that leads to distractions," Kramer says.

Consider what you're putting in your space and whether it actually needs to be there. Is that fun piece of décor making your office cozier and more functional, or is it going to pull your focus from your work?

04 Pick a Desk That Looks and Feels Good

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BECCA INTERIORS

Desks are the focal point of any home office, and you'll want to consider what the desk feels like as well as what it looks like. "Always invest in properly proportioned desks," Kramer says. After all, you'll be spending most of the day there.

Look for a desk that's big enough to serve as a comfortable workspace, and tall enough to accommodate your legs—then consider what it looks like.

"There are so many options available, you no longer have to sacrifice style for function," Kramer adds.

09 Find a Chair You Love to Sit In

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TYLER KARU

A great chair isn't just pretty—it's also comfortable and supportive enough to spend all day in. "Ergonomics should be a big consideration when selecting desks and work chairs," Morris says. She recommends finding a chair that feels comfortable to you.

Kramer agrees. "If you're sitting all day, it's important that your desk chair has good lumbar support," she says. Comfort is worth investing in, and if the chair you're eyeing will help you get your job done sans distractions, it'll probably pay for itself in no time.

15 Pair Decorative Lighting With Task Lighting

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PROEM STUDIO

Since seeing clearly is a big part of getting your work done, you definitely want to get your home office lighting set up right.

“Lighting is an integral part of home office design,” Kramer says. She recommends mixing and matching different fixtures to add function and flexibility to your space—and a little style, as well.

“Mixing bold decorative lighting with important task lighting can be an opportunity for a fun juxtaposition,” she says. Pair your most practical task lamps with a few striking statement lamps for good measure.

18 Sprinkle in a Few Plants

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SIRE DESIGN

Plants reliably brighten up any space, and few spaces need greenery as much as a home office. It doesn't matter how striking your desk is or how many cute desk accessories you've scored—your home office is likely to feel monotonous over time.

“Always bring in some greenery,” Kramer says. “This will keep you energized and connected to nature throughout your workday.” Since plants naturally grow and change, they can be a great way to keep your space feeling new and interesting. Plus, they'll literally freshen up the room.

26 When in Doubt, Declutter

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BESPOKE ONLY

If your home office is in need of a tune-up, take a moment to declutter. “Take inventory. What do you have in the space that is not being used regularly?” Kramer says. “Remove those items or find smart storage solutions to move them out of sight.”

Switching up your storage set-up may be all you need to freshen up your space. And who knows? It could even help you focus. “A cluttered workspace impedes production,” Kramer says.

31 Sprinkle in Personal Touches

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REENA SOTROPA

Remember that your home office is *yours*, so add pops of personality where you can. “Your office is a space where you can express things about yourself and bring in personal touches,” Kramer says. “We often find offices are a good opportunity to highlight things you love, like art, fashion, cars, etc.”

Ultimately, you want your home office to be a space where you *feel good* spending time. And if a sweet photograph or a few objets d’art will get you closer to that feeling, they’re worth it.