

BYO Setting up your Home Office

You're past the point of using your kitchen table for writing that business report. You've invested in a computer, printer and other office essentials and now you need a permanent place to put them. Before you go shopping, think about these questions with the help of the suggestions inside:



❶ Where should your home office be and how much room do you have available?

Even a small home office can be efficient, if it provides the right storage and work surface.

❷ Is it possible that the office will need to be reorganized or moved?

How often? If more often than not, you need to have a flexible set-up that is also tough enough to withstand moving.

❸ What equipment must be incorporated — and where will the power source be?

Plan your work areas with outlets in mind. Or plan to have power sources and phone lines added beforehand.

❹ What kind of office activities will you be doing?

Computer work, art projects, meetings all require a different amount of work surface. You need deeper work surfaces for computers and wider spaces for spreading out projects.

❺ Does the work space need to accommodate more than one person?

If so, determine if you need to interact or prefer divided areas and plan the space accordingly.

❻ Any privacy needs to consider?

Distractions can be more than annoying, they can ruin your productivity. If possible, separate your office from family activity. Or at least consider a bookcase as a divider wall.

❼ What will be filed and stored? How much?

Paper files can be vertical or horizontal, hidden or open. They can be reachable from your chair or placed on a far wall if immediate access is not important. Computer discs will also need storage space.

❽ How visible is your space?

If your office is in a high-traffic location in your home, you may need a way to "close up shop" at day's end.

Now that you've given it some thought, you're ready to create the office that works for you.

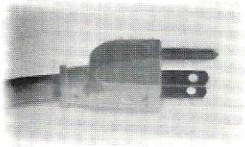
Office equipment

Identify all the electrical equipment you use so you can design a space convenient to available electrical outlets. Don't forget about phone jacks, too! Modems and fax machines can change your phone usage enough to warrant another phone line. The primary equipment — such as a computer or telephone — should go as close together as possible since they are often used in combination. Short on space? Printers and fax machines can fit inside a cabinet.



Electrical

Don't blow your fuse! Make sure you have enough power to run all your equipment. Keep in mind laser printers use a lot of electricity during printing. Add up the machines and lighting requirements.



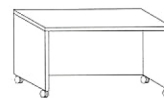
This will give you the amount of power and outlets needed. Check with an electrician if you think you may need to add a circuit.

Strong power surges, such as those caused by lightning strikes, can ruin computer memory circuits even if the computer is off. Computers and fax machines should be plugged into surge protectors which divert harmful electricity.

Now, what to do with all those wires? Keep them out of the way with options like cord channels underneath surfaces. Openings in work surfaces and through some support legs provide complete wire management.

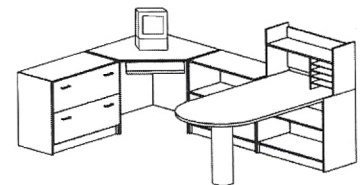
Work surface

Select the work surface configuration that makes you most comfortable. Work surfaces can be combined to create many shapes. Make sure your surface is at least 24" deep to allow space for a computer CPU with a monitor on top. Start with a spot for your computer and build from there. If you need space for spreading out projects or doing paperwork while working at the computer, consider using a corner desk and add returns on each side for extra work

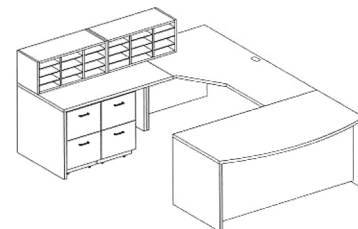


surface. A return on casters gives you extra surface that can be moved around. Or use a

peninsula top projecting from a bookcase as a desk/meeting area.



A U-shape or L-shape arrangement gives you the "wraparound" effect, placing everything close at hand. Keep frequently used items within reach on the surface or within desktop organizers.



Keep in mind that standard desks are 29" high; the computer keyboard is most comfortable 24½"- 28" from the floor. An adjustable keyboard tray can be installed under the work surface providing the right height for your individual use. Ergonomic adjustable keyboard mechanisms can be moved up and down easily to accommodate multiple users; some have reverse tilt for wrist comfort. Keyboard trays and mechanisms can be wide enough to accommodate a mouse.

Storage

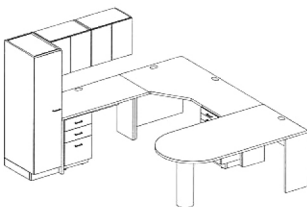
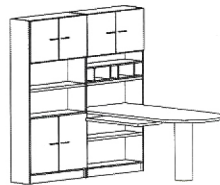
Spending way too much time looking for a file? The right furniture can help you organize all



your “stuff” and improve your productivity. When deciding where to store material, you should consider how often it’s used. Drawer and file

cabinets that are part of your work area are great for active storage space. A mobile file can be rolled underneath the desk — or pulled out for extra flat surface. Consider putting inactive storage somewhere else — across the room or in another part of your house.

When planning storage, think vertical or hidden space. Use all the wall space you have available! Put a hutch on top of a desk that can hold binders, books and office supplies. Tall bookcases are great for storage and more. A peninsula top projecting from a bookcase provides spacious

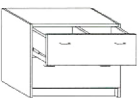


work surface. Built-in wall cabinets also make effective use of wall space.

Standard bookcases with adjustable shelves allow storage of large and small items. Add doors to bookcases if you want to conceal your materials.



Many filing systems have hanging rails for letter and legal size files. But not all file cabinets are created equal. Grasp a drawer firmly on either



side when it is open and try to move it side-to-side. If it wobbles or feels loose, it is not good quality. Examine

the drawer slides. The best ones have steel ball bearings for smooth movement and allow the drawer to be fully extended. Drawers are one of the most used office components, therefore, durability and ease of use are very important.

Chair

Sit in a dining room chair for eight hours and you’ll understand the need for an “ergonomic” chair. For best back support the chair’s height and back should be adjustable. Be sure that your feet are planted firmly at all times and that the chair supports the full length of your thighs in order not to interrupt circulation in your legs. If you must work for prolonged periods in front of a computer, periodically raise or lower your chair seat to change your viewing angle and thus relieve fatigue in your neck. Consider investing in a task chair which provides a “forward tilt” position.

Proper Lumbar Support

Adjust the seat back up or down until the inward curve corresponds to the curve of your lower back for proper support. Adjust the depth of the seat back to allow approximately 3” to 4” of clearance from the front edge of the chair to the back of your knees.

Height Adjustment

The correct height is needed to support the small of your back — reduces fatigue and prevents backaches.

Forward Tilt

Move your chair into this position for four or five minute periods to straighten your back-especially if you have been sitting at the front of your chair and slumping over your work. Then reset the chair for proper lumbar support.



Chair Casters

are made for either hard floors or carpets so be sure you have the right type for your office floor.

Lighting

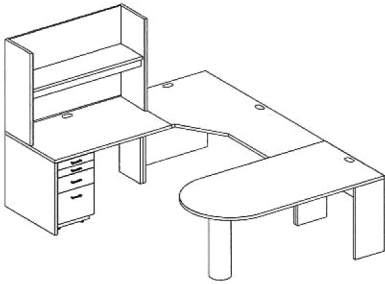
While general lighting will illuminate your work area, a desk lamp or task light under a hutch is



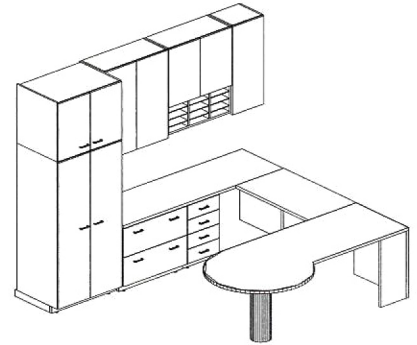
needed to eliminate shadows from overhead lights and will help you concentrate on your work. Window treatments are essential if you work at a computer. If you can’t cut light from a window, try placing your computer monitor at a 90 degree angle to the window. To avoid eye strain, keep the lighting lower when you’re working at the computer than if you were reading the paper.

Design personalized work space with flexible office system

- 1 There is generous work surface in this U-shape office for spreading out projects or doing paperwork. A hutch and file cabinet provide storage for books, binders, files and supplies. The peninsula top offers space for work or meetings. A mobile file is an option for more storage and can be tucked under the peninsula top when not in use.



- 2 Everything is at the user's fingertips in this spacious wraparound office. Built-in storage cabinets with the handy organizing slots underneath make efficient use of wall space. The tall cabinets with doors can house anything from books and binders to jackets and coats. The lateral file holds either letter or legal size files. Additional file cabinets can be found in a variety of sizes for maximum storage.



Keep in mind the following when using this Space Planning Guide to design your home office: 1) Location and width of windows and doors 2) Electric and telephone outlets 3) Floor and wall vents or radiators 4) Ceiling heights 5) Unusually deep baseboards
Scale: 1/4" = 1 foot

