

The best home office for lockdown: expert advice for WFH

Still working on a kitchen chair or in a dark corner? It's time for a makeover, no matter how little space you have

Here we go again. Now that you have swept away most of the Christmas tree needles, the WFH nine to five starts anew. We have never worked harder at home, and our homes have never had to work as hard either, with rooms multitasking as classrooms, office space and meeting rooms, as well as somewhere to get to grips with our tough new normal.

Nothing will replace the watercooler chat, but it is possible to make your environment that bit cooler when it comes to the design. Emma Morley, the founder of Trifle Creative, used to design work spaces for commercial clients including Soho House and Sonia Friedman Productions, but last year turned her expert eye towards our homes. She has launched a consultancy (from £75) and home-office packages (from £522) to help us to transform our work-life arrangements.

“We recognise that a home office also needs to work harmoniously within a domestic setting,” she says. “Stylish, ergonomically sound furniture and accessories are key to this, to help to boost our productivity and overall wellbeing.”

After the novelty of lockdown-working last spring to the misery of the winter commute from bedroom to kitchen, getting your domestic office set-up sorted is the key to getting by — even thriving — in 2021.



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The location

Find a corner in your living room, a nook in your kitchen, hallway or loft, or a spot on the landing where you can put a table, chair and laptop. Never underestimate the power of natural light. Sitting in a dark environment can play havoc with your productivity. If you can, position your workspace within six metres of a window that allows for good light levels (ie not so much that it causes screen glare).

At this point you need to consider rearranging furniture to get it right, whether it is configuring a small multifunctional space or finding a solution to the sudden inconvenience of open-plan living.

Mark out your territory. Use decorative washi tape — made from traditional Japanese paper — on the ceiling and the walls to either side of your desk to create a border around the workspace (less than £5 at [etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com) and [paperchase.com](https://www.paperchase.com)). And, according to Karen Haller, an applied colour-psychology consultant and author of *The Little Book of Colour*, blue is the colour of the mind. “Strong blues stimulate clear thought; lighter, soft blues will calm the mind and aid concentration,” she says. Also, green is life-affirming, so feels necessary right now.

Create a work “zone” with a rug, and for boundaries use a sofa, a tall, open bookcase ([shelvingsystem.co.uk](https://www.shelvingsystem.co.uk) does what it says on the tin; [oakfurnitureland.co.uk](https://www.oakfurnitureland.co.uk) has some nice open designs that let light through) or a screen ([decorlove.biz](https://www.decorlove.biz) has a range of room dividers, many of them now half-price; the plywood pegboard screen at [kreisdesign.com](https://www.kreisdesign.com) ticks all the practical and on-trend boxes for £450; B&Q has good budget buys at [diy.com](https://www.diy.com)).

As much as carving out a space for your desk, it’s about being able to hide the world of work outside office hours.

The desk

Some of us will have to continue to make do with the kitchen table, but this is the year that you should resolve to invest in that forever desk, or a neat solution such as the Yo-Yo desk mini, which can convert any table in your home to a stand-up desk (£230, sit-stand.com). This website is a virtual megastore of adjustable-height desks, including the classic [Flytta 2](#) (£720) and the more novel [Desk Bike](#) (£380), which covers almost all new year's resolutions.

Among the best small designs, for that lost space on the landing or under the stairs, are the Colas Vintage Pine Console Desk/Table in vintage pine or dark oak (£185, laredoute.co.uk) or the Nathan corner desk (£87.50, habitat.co.uk).

Another clever solution is a fold-out such as the Fläpps Wall Desk/Secretary by Ambivalenz (£169, iamfy.co) or the Foldii Fold Out Workspace (£199, etsy.com). Again, being able to close the lid on the world of work after hours is good for your mental health.



Soren office chair, £399, John Lewis