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## How to Create a Productive (and Chic) Workspace

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Milly Burroughs consults the industry's foremost interior design experts for tips on how to make working from home a more appealing concept



De Beauvoir Block Photography by Nicholas Worley

Text Milly Burroughs



It doesn't take more than a few weeks of freelance life to realise that your bed is not the prime location for harnessing creativity, or that sitting pretzel-legged on your sofa while firing off your 100th email of the day might be the cause of your new-found neck pain. So how do you make working from home work for you?

Freedom from the chains of office life can actually be liberating, and it is absolutely possible to revel in the lack of overheads or hours spent on public transport that are associated with more traditional working locations, but first you must create a space that allows you to be your most productive self, without compromise. For your professional pleasure, we asked a handful of workspace and design experts to share their top tips for doing just that.



Daniel Hopwood Photography by Andrew Beasley

### 1. Think anti-office and embrace your space

According to [Sella Concept](#) co-founder Gayle Noonan, the best workspace is, "something that looks nothing like an office". The multi-disciplinary design duo recently completed work on creative hub De Beauvoir Block and Noonan firmly believes in the power of creating comfortable and inviting spaces. "The best office spaces are those that feel like living rooms," she argues. "The more domestic and lounge-like you can make it, the better."

### 2. Find the light and get better sleep

It's not just the green stuff you need to keep in your sights. Despina Katsikakis, whose expertise has been utilised by the likes of Microsoft and Google, also highlights the unrivalled benefits of working in a space with plenty of natural light and a reliable flow of fresh air. "Daylight helps to improve your quality of sleep, while high quality air can have a double cognitive function."



De Beauvoir Block Photography by Nicholas Worley

### 3. Go green to reduce stress

The key to creating that calming lounge vibe? According to Noonan it's down to three essential elements: "Table, chair and plant – you need a bit of greenery, it just injects life." Throwing some actual science into the mix, [TwentyTwo](#) workplace consultant Katsikakis adds that a little greenery can be a powerful tool for actively reducing stress. "Being able to see nature reduces cortisol significantly – your stress factor. Seeing the colour green boosts your creativity levels. Even having highly evocative images of nature can have the same effect."

### 4. De-clutter to dodge distraction

Working from home has definitely seen more than one of us hunched over a laptop, wedged between a row of freshly washed laundry and yesterday's leftover lunch, but [Squire & Partners](#) director and head of yesterday's design Maria Cheung says the importance of boundaries. "Remove distractions, even if you only intend to work in a space for part of the day. There's nothing less conducive to producing your best work than staring at a drying rack full of laundry! You should be in a comfortable space that is filled with light. Get shelves for displaying curiosities that can inspire you, as well as neat storage units to house everything you use from time to time."



Rachel Chudley Photography by Sean Myers

### 5. Bend the rules and focus on flexibility

"The way we work is changing all the time. With home workspaces I think flexibility is the key," says interior designer talent [Rachel Chudley](#). She recently collaborated with architect Duncan Woodburn and Ellgood Builders to create an über-versatile home workspace with the needs of multiple family members in mind. "The youngest son uses the central table to do arts and crafts. The older son sits and reads in the nook. Doors open to reveal a built-in desk with hidden storage and seating. Other doors open to reveal a sink to wash brushes, et cetera. The central table is on wheels and can be easily moved to make way for yoga space on the floor." As remarked by Chudley, "a home workspace should also be welcoming and warm," so create one uniquely tailored to your needs.



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