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Date: 19 January 2012
Page: 60
Reach: 779779
Size: 842cm2
Value: 27887.04



The perfect workplace

FORGET chats around the office water cooler – an increasing number of Brits are working from home, where they feel more productive. The amount of self-employed workers grew by 4.2 per cent, according to the Office for National Statistics. The website Freelancer.co.uk reported an increase in new registrations from 39,519 in 2010 to 42,817 last year. A recent survey of 1,948 British office workers commissioned by IT services company 2e2 has showed 55 per

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cent of workers felt more productive at home and 63 per cent felt restrained by the traditional office way of working.

‘With today’s increased connectivity and the latest smartphones, tablets and laptops, there are far fewer barriers to working flexibly than ever before,’ says Mike Hockey, director at 2e2. ‘This means people can work more effectively at home, in the office or a combination of both.’

Head of fashion at Stylecompare.co.uk Johanna Payton works from home and believes she now gets more done.

‘I’m more productive – simply because I love my job,’ she says. ‘I work in a lovely environment, surrounded by my own things, my own music and my own company, which I enjoy immensely. And thanks to social media and living so close to central London, I never feel isolated.’

So if you are tempted to work from home, here’s our guide to getting your office just right.



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KNÖS BOX

What can we say – it's a box with a lid. But sometimes in life you need a box with a lid for all those important documents you haven't got around to throwing away. The leather-look surface means you won't want to hide it out of view either.

£13.59, www.ikea.com



VICTORIAN OAK FILING CABINET

Sturdy and dependable is what this solid oak filing cabinet is all about, bringing a rich sense of the traditional to a pared-down office space. Brass handles complement the three large main drawers and two smaller card drawers.

£825, www.oscarsinteriors.com

MINISTRY WALL CLOCK

Bring a 1960s office vibe to your home (chain smoking and Scotch bottle optional) with this rectangular wall clock. The simplicity stands out thanks to a striking shape and bold numbering.

Time is money, don't forget.

£79, www.made.com

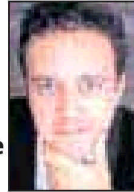


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TOP TIPS FOR WORKING FROM HOME

Alex Johnson's blog www.shedworking.co.uk chronicles the everyday aspects of working from home (in particular, in the shed). He is also the author of *Shedworking: The Alternative Workplace Revolution*. Here are his tips.



- Always dress for work. That doesn't necessarily mean a suit but if you don't feel the part, you won't work the part: socks for success.
- Take at least one break a day – go for a walk, have a swim, meet people face to face – it's easy to go stir-crazy in front of a screen all day by yourself.
- In the nicest way possible, ensure people understand that you are doing your job when you are working from home and not available to do chores.
- Consider spending time in co-working facilities or with other home workers – this not only gets you out of the house but also enables networking.
- Work as far away from the fridge as you can. It's very easy to keep nipping to the kitchen for a little snack and within six months you'll need new trousers.



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DREYFUSS 500 PHONE

Whether making crucial business calls or just ringing in sick, you need a home desk phone with a sense of purpose. The Dreyfuss 500 Desk Phone not only sounds the part but looks the part too, with a natty chrome finish that would make Gordon Gekko feel a tad inferior. The style was introduced in 1949 but still looks spiffing today.
 £59.95, www.notonthestreet.com



ANGLEPOISE TYPE 1228

Not only will this classic lamp brighten up your desk, it's a handy prop for interrogating flatmates over that missing can of Stella. All Anglepoises are iconic but this daffodil-yellow Type 1228 – created in 1994 by the man who designed modern Britain, Kenneth Grange – is exclusive to the Design Museum.
 £185, www.designmuseumshop.com

HERMAN MILLER SAYL OFFICE CHAIR

If you're looking for inspiration, aim high, that's what we say. The frameless back, designed by Yves Béhar, is a nod to San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge. The supportive structure gives freedom of movement and helps to keep your back cool.
 £599, www.johnlewis.com



EXECUTIVE CHAIR

Fancy yourself as a bit of a Lord Sugar but your business aspirations haven't yet hit the sweet spot? This bargain-bucket leather-fronted chair will give your home office a touch of gravitas without bankrupting the company. It has gas height adjustment and twin-wheel castors.
 £29, www.asda.com



EAMES EDU DESK

This timeless piece was designed by Charles & Ray Eames in 1949 as part of a system of free-standing multifunctional pieces. It is made from maple-veneered plywood and coloured lacquered screens, and its chromed feet are adjustable.
 £708.80, www.conranshop.co.uk



VIKING CUBI

If space is tight, this compact office should do the job. It slides together when not in use, converting into a cupboard. To restore your global empire, simply slide the top open and fire up your laptop.
 £99.99, www.viking-direct.co.uk

