

WORKING FROM HOME

How to Stay More Organized



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Introduction

Working from home fulltime, with multiple projects going on, can leave your home office and the rest of your house looking a mess. Here's how to stay organized when your house is also your office.

A disorganized home and office can distract you from getting work done. Luckily, there are some steps you can take to get and stay organized. By keeping your home and office decluttered and neat, you give yourself space where you can [get stuff done](#).

More importantly, a tidy office is more than just a productivity booster; it's good for your stress levels. A messy home and office may [cause you unneeded stress](#). That stress not only affects your overall health, but it may make it harder for you to get your work done.

Create a Workspace

Not everyone who works from home has an actual office, but you should have an area where you usually do your work. Defining where your workspace is and when it serves that purpose will make it easier to stay focused and organized.

Don't have a dedicated home office? Don't worry; you can still be organized. Spaces can be multipurpose and defined by the time you use them. For example, if you use the dining room table as your work office when the kids are at school, you can keep your office and desk supplies in a fabric bin stashed on a shelf when not in use. This allows you to set the table up to look like a desk when you're working and pack it all up at the end of the day. This can serve a dual function too---not only does it keep your stuff organized but taking it out and putting it away can serve as a signal to your brain that you're working hard and then done with the day.



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You can also work from the couch, or wherever you want. Where you decide to work may also have something to do with what kind of work you're doing from home. A desk or table will do if you work online. If you handcraft items, you may need a workroom. A spare bedroom makes a great office space, as does an empty closet (if it's big enough to squeeze a little desk or workstation in). If you do woodworking or another messy craft, a shed or space in the garage may be ideal.

Whatever and wherever your home workspace is, make it look like a place of work. Keep it tidy and organized---and make sure it allows you some private and distraction-free time to focus on your work.

Make Sure Everything Has a Home

Ever sit down to get to work and realize you can't find what you need? The key to good organization, be it in a kitchen or a home office, is knowing where things are and where they go. Make sure everything in your home office space has a place to call home. A few handy items (again, depending on the type of work you're doing from home) that may help you stay organized include:

- **A Sturdy Desk** - When you work remotely you can work from the couch or the dining room table. However, having a dedicated and sturdy desk to spread out on and keep your tools near at hand is a great way to focus and stay organized.
- **A Filing Cabinet** - This is an excellent way to keep papers organized and out of the way until you need them. No room for a full-size cabinet? Use a small filing box or [digitize your paper with a document scanner](#).
- **Shelf Space** - Whether you're making things and need to park the finished product or just have a lot of computer accessories, you need shelf space to store your stuff.

Keep Your Workspace Tidy

By embellishing your office space with a desk, cabinets, and shelving space, you make it easier to keep your workspace tidy. But just having places to put things away doesn't mean you will. Here are some ways to help keep your office neat and tidy:

- Put stuff away as soon as you're done using it. Leaving things out because you're sure you'll use them later is a recipe for a desk full of clutter.
- Keep your printer stocked with paper and ink (and put the extra supplies away instead of leaving them piled up near the printer).
- Keep other accessories, like pens and paper clips, in a drawer or a holder made for desk supplies.
- Clean your desk or workbench off daily. Whether you're vacuuming up sawdust or putting away paper invoices, daily cleaning keeps the bigger messes at bay.
- You are your own office cleaner---tidy your office top to bottom once a week, including vacuuming, dusting, and wiping down surfaces. This will help motivate you to keep surfaces clean all week long so that there isn't a bunch of junk in your way come cleaning day.

Once you get in the habit of sending things back to their respective homes---be it in a drawer or the hallway closet---when you're done with them, you'll find it so much easier to keep things tidy.

Organize Your Computer Desktop, Too

If you spend a good deal of your workday on the computer, don't forget to treat your computer's desktop just like any other workspace:

- Set up file folders for different projects. Keep them separate on the desktop or put them all in a "work" folder (and don't forget to [back them up](#) on a thumb drive, memory card, disk, or external hard drive).
- Close unused browser tabs. Leaving 40+ tabs open is the digital version of leaving every document on your desk in case you need it.
- Clean your virtual space like you clean your physical space. Once a month purge files you don't need. Don't forget to take a peek in your Downloads folder, the junk drawer of the computer where files are left to get dusty.

No matter what kind of work you do, or where you do it, keeping both physical and digital workspaces organized will make you more productive, less stressed, and happier to get to work.