

Choosing the Right Desk for your Home Office

Selecting the proper desk can be confusing and many ask should I sit or stand? How high should the desk be? There are some basics for setting up an at-home workstation properly and starts with a proper desk or workstation.

The right desk for your office can make your work day go much smoother, while the wrong one can make you miserable. You'll have to investigate the pros and cons of each solution and find out what's right for your situation. When the time comes to replace your office desk, consider these important points in choosing the best work desk for your needs.

Consider Your Home Workstyle Habits and Tools

For a home desk:

- Consider the "L"-shaped desks which are often a good solution and fit when your work desk needs to share space in another room like a bedroom or family room.

Tight on space:

- Choose a compact computer desk or mobile computer cart.
- Some may find a smaller desk sufficient for their work needs.

Sit or Stand?

According to Cornell University, sitting or standing for long periods of time lead to fatigue and the key is to build frequent movement variety into the normal workday.

<http://ergo.human.cornell.edu/CUESitStand.html>

Desk for Home:

- The width of the desk should be at least 24 inches wide.
- The depth of the desk should be at least 20-30 inches deep. This is important so that when you are sitting back against the backrest the monitors can be positioned at arms distance.
- Make sure the desk is made from a material that will be sturdy enough to hold all your equipment.
 - Laminate: the most popular choice
 - Metal or Steel: the most durable choice
 - Wood or Veneer: the most elegant choice
- The desk should have enough clearance in the front where your legs can sit underneath of it without the desk going into your legs.
- If you use a 90 degree desk make sure you are working on the straight of one side and not in the corner of the desk.



Ex. 1- Table with plenty of leg room and clearance



Ex.2- Limited leg room and the drawer cuts down the clearance room for the top of the legs

Ergonomics:

- Standard desk heights of 28 to 30 inches from the floor are sufficient for most users.
- Sitting behind the desk, there should optimally be at least three-and-a half feet of space.
- For computer-users, keyboards need to be placed at a comfortable height. Keyboards placed on traditional desks may be at too high a height and may result in significant discomfort or muscle strain for the user. Computer desks should either be equipped with a keyboard platform, or legs that can be adjusted. Proper hand height (where hands meet keyboard) is 25" – 27" for females and 27" – 29" for males. Be sure that any keyboard platform is large enough to hold a mouse.
- Desktop equipment and materials should be within easy and comfortable reach, and should have sufficient space so as not to overload the desktop.
- If the desk has a sharp edge, consider placing a wrist pad along the edge to help prevent unnecessary pressure and pinching on the inner surface of the wrists.

Other Useful Resources:

There are so many different opinions and conflicting research studies on the "perfect desk". Check out Cornell's recommendation on selecting the proper desk.

<http://ergo.human.cornell.edu/ergoguide.html>

In this video, the Steve Meagher offers insight into a standing workstation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vImxVEFLSt4>

