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Cover story

'We extended our 1960s house to create a family home'

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**FOCUS
ON
INTERIOR
DESIGN**

If you work from home – or are planning to – use this guide to help create the best practical, functional space, from compact hideaway hubs to stylish studios

FEATURE **RACHEL OGDEN**

Home offices

GO BELOW STAIRS

Reclaim the spare space under your staircase with a made-to-measure home office. Not only can shelving be designed to fit right up to the underside, it's a great opportunity to create a feature by displaying favourite items and photos. Opt for purpose-built office furniture so you can incorporate useful components, such as slide-out cupboard shelves that are ideal for housing printers and scanners or bulky equipment that you may not want on show. **Lucia fully fitted home office in Alder, total W250cm, around £1,800 including design, delivery and installation, Sharps**



FIT VERSATILE FURNITURE

This desk has been built as an extension of a banquette-style dining nook, yet remove the chair and computer and it could easily revert to being a dresser. Reduced-depth units work well in the narrow space and what it lacks in size, it more than makes up for in clever design. It also features a concealed pop-out power point and wide drawers and cupboards for storing paperwork. **Bespoke Classic hand-painted oak furniture in Light Blue by Farrow & Ball with wholesale oak work surface and shelving, from £5,000, Roundhouse**



Once regarded as a luxury, an office space at home is now a must-have, whether it's a dedicated room, built-for-purpose pod or giving wasted space a more practical use.

By creating a specific area for an office, you can keep your living space free for rest and relaxation – the ideal work-life balance.

Start by thinking about the purpose of your space. If you'll be working in there on a daily basis, creating a different 'feel' from the rest of your rooms may help you to focus. Building a separate room in the garden is another option but comes with the challenges of adding light, heat and power. You could get an extension of your home's electricity supply, so speak to an electrician about the practicalities of cabling or ask the firm constructing your space. Alternatively, solar panels will remove the expense of installing electric cabling but their use will depend on your building's position in the garden for sunlight. Lockable windows and doors are also essential for keeping it secure.

Finally, seize the advantage of not residing in the corporate world by taking control of how your work environment looks and feels. Your home office can be a canvas for your own style, so once the basics are in place, such as a suitable desk, chair and storage, add photo frames, inspiring artwork and stationery to make it feel like a cohesive part of your home.

SPACE PLANNING

Building from scratch

'Garden rooms and studios should be designed for use in all weathers and seasons, meaning that, come rain or shine, all you need to worry about is where to put the kettle. When designing a garden studio, you'll be given the options to specify underfloor heating and built-in radiators, and to decide where best to install light fixings and power outlets. It's worth giving some thought to this, as you want the room to be a productive space throughout the day and be able to offset any weather that may threaten your concentration levels.

'With this in mind, heating of some kind is highly recommended – the idea of trudging down the garden to your freezing cold office in the middle of winter would put anyone off productivity – so ensure you install the right heating type for you and don't leave it until the last minute to arrange. Safety checks are also a must, as some heaters are unsuitable for a garden studio environment. This can also be the case with lighting, which should always be fitted by a certified electrician.'

Michael Barnes, managing director of Atelier Garden Studios

Thinking big

'When planning a home office within a new extension, you need to consider how best to utilise the space so that it's compatible with your needs. This will determine the size and composition of your working area. Having a home office within an extension is advantageous because it enables you to keep work separate and within a designated space, so it won't interfere with the "zen" of your home. Comfort needs to be a high priority – access to power points, adequate light, ventilation, heating and softened acoustics are important elements to consider, as much as storage solutions to ensure the work space is streamlined. Try installing cabling grommets to ensure wires are organised and hidden. Bespoke fitted furniture is an ideal way of making the most of limited space.'

'If your home office is housed within a glass extension, ensure blinds are installed to regulate natural lighting, shade and temperature. Extensions tend to be cooler than the rest of the house, so investing in underfloor heating might also be a viable solution to keep the area warm without installing radiators, which can encroach on space. Meanwhile, an air-conditioning system is hugely beneficial in keeping the work area cool during summer months.'

Barbara Genda, founder of Barbara Genda Bespoke Furniture

Double-duty rooms

'Spaces within hallways and landings that are often thought of as being unusable can actually be a perfect place to create a small home office. There's a wide range of space-saving solutions that will still perform the same function, without too much compromise being placed on work space. With the help of a few innovative designs and ideas, a fully functional office can be created within the living or dining room, as well as in other areas, such as below stairs.'

'When it comes to making the most of the space that's available, the style of home office chosen needs to be considered in relation to where the work area is being placed. For example, where a home office area is being



OPEN UP YOUR SPACE

This extension includes a centrally placed clear desk to prevent the floor area being interrupted. Wraparound shelving allows the glazed sides to be a focal point. Bespoke fitted bookcase in oak veneer, left wing measures H230x W204xD50cm, right wing measures H230x W160xD50cm; base units, H96xW547x D53cm, from £1,200 per m, **Barbara Genda Bespoke Furniture**



PUT THE GARDEN TO WORK

For properties that may have planning restrictions, having a standalone garden office is an efficient use of outdoor space. Designate it as a work space from the outset and it can be fitted out accordingly with power points, tailored lighting solutions and natural light from large windows. Properly insulated, it will be as comfortable as any room in your home. **Modular Garden Studio** with steel frames, timber cladding and aluminium doors and windows, H300xW900x D450cm, from £17,055, **Atelier Garden Studios**



PLAN A HIS-AND-HERS DESIGN

Fitting out a room from scratch means it can serve more than one function and person. This double knee-hole study comes with a mix of large file drawers and cupboards and open units to soften the look, while a TV and comfy chairs allow it to be a place to unwind. Door panels in pippy oak add interest and contrast. **Bespoke solid oak and pippy oak office** with stainless-steel and hand-sewn leather bar handles. Room measures H250x W430xD330cm, from £15,000 for a similar size scheme, **Rencraft**