5 rules for working from home

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Working from home is great, but only if we keep focus. Here are out 5 rules for working from home...

I have recently started working from home a lot more, I have it built into my freelance contracts that where possible I will work at home as it not only allows me to focus without distraction (and without politics) but also allows me to multitask across numerous client projects in concentrated bursts to deliver both productivity and efficiency.

People always ask how I make the most of working from home and how I created a productive environment. The truth is that is takes time and thought in order to 'design' a space that makes you feel at work whilst also being able to enjoy the fact that you are at home.

Here are my top five rules for driving productivity and efficiency in your home office…

One - Create a dedicated space

For me, the office I use in my home was my dad's when he was alive, I have recently redesigned it to be a creative space (as it had become a dumping ground in recent years).

I took the time to let my fiancé and visitors we have round know that this is a working space,

when I'm in there it is to be treated as if I am leaving the house and going to work… no texts asking me to put the washing on, no calls to run to the shops or anything like that… this is a place of work and I need to concentrate.

Two - Design it to cater to your needs

When you are employed by someone else, they provide you a desk to work on, a keyboard, a mouse, a laptop stand, provisions for tea and coffee etc.

Now you are working for yourself, you need to start to think about these things off your own back.

Personally, I have setup a sturdy laptop stand that improves my posture and bought a wireless Apple trackpad and a wireless Apple keyboard so that not only does it do a job, it looks great too - just remember to get a lot of batteries!

Do you need space to think and pace around whilst ideating and thinking through creative solutions? Then make sure you are not putting in lots of clutter for the sake of it.

Do you have lots of files or need space for stationary and books? Ensure you think through the space and build those solutions in.

Three - Spend money on it

This one is key. Designing and decorating your home office is tax deductible so it is worth putting in the effort and cash to get it right, as you're ultimately going to spend a lot of time in here, so feeling comfortable and proud of your working space is crucial.

What did this mean to me?

I bought in loads of Post-Its & Sharpies for scribbling down ideas and planning initial stages of projects.

My desk was my father's as it inspires me to keep going with my business ideas.

My fiancé bought me a [Nespresso](#)

machine for Christmas so I have great tasting coffee at my fingertips when I'm ploughing through project work or when I have clients over for meetings.

The biggest 'extravagance' I splashed out on was a gigantic, wall-sized glass board… similar to a whiteboard but looks a lot slicker and allows me to to map out ideas and aids productivity by being able to get all early stage thinking onto the board before crafting presentations as well as

resource planning.

Four - Treat it as if you are 'going' to work

When designing the room, I wanted laminate flooring installed for ease of maintenance over carpet and also to look modern and sleek.

I did, however, get into a few heated discussions with my fiancé as I wanted a different type of laminate flooring compared to what we use in other areas of the house… I feel it changes the pace of the space and also, on a very deep subconscious level, makes me feel that I am going to work and not just going into a different room that looks the same.

I backed down eventually so we could buy the flooring in bulk for better cost efficiencies but that idea was carried through the rest of the design of the room.

Taking breaks as a reward for 'task' completion is something I found hard at first, I would spend every waking hour in there trying to get work done without changing my scenery but it became apparent that by taking little reward breaks and 'clocking off' no later than 8pm each night.

There is always a temptation to slob out in trackies and t-shirt but personally I need to 'feel' that I am in my working head space so insist on getting dressed - just jeans and polo shirt but it feels like my work attire instead of my chilling out at home attire.

Five - Have some nice touches that inspire and delight you

It cannot all be work however, you need the appropriate balance between work and play with design quirks that may raise a smile, they may inspire or they may be great for when you have guests.

Personally I bought a [Chesterfield](#)

 sofa - as I have always wanted one - from eBay for just £170 including delivery and has minimal signs of wear. I also put up a huge print of Magritte's Son of Man painting as I have always found it to be inspirational and am in the process of working out how to put together a wall of memorabilia and shirts of my favourite football team as both a conversation piece and a memory of something I love.

Oh, and a picture of [Kirsty](#), my fiancé, on my desk.

In 2013 I want to get a treadmill for somewhere in the house to start taking 'active breaks' when working from home and keeping fit without having to pay ridiculous gym fees.

How did you design your home office? What working from home tips do you have?