

Give Your Home Office The Raise It Deserves



GONE ARE THE DAYS OF ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL CUBICLES – HOME WORKSPACES ARE THE NEW NORMAL. THEY SHOULD LEAVE YOU FEELING LIKE A BOSS. WELCOME TO THE V&A'S ULTIMATE GUIDE TO WORKING FROM HOME.

WORDS KIM BOUGAARDT

ROOM WITH A HUE

By using good design principles, any space – be it a spare room or garage – can be turned into a home office. “Consider ergonomics and set up your room around your needs, budget and spatial constraints, then start with the essentials,” says interior architect and designer Hanno de Swardt from Onnah Design (@onnah_design). “A desk at proper height and deep enough to work from comfortably, supportive seating and good lighting are essential.”

Go bold by introducing colour. “Most of us know our ‘happy’ colours,” he says. “If not, think about colours that resonate with your personality.” Colour in your workspace can affect your mood and productivity levels. Choose hues that make you happy rather than simply opting for what’s trendy. Interior designer Alberto Villalobos (@avillalobosdesign) has used turmeric for this workspace, but energising yellow, calming blue and soothing green also work well.

BRIGHT SPARK

Poor lighting can result in headaches and eye strain, so set up your desk in strong natural light. Need a boost? Think desk lamps...



For the traditionalist

An investment piece, this Fritz Hansen Kaiser Idell table lamp (R14 500, **Limeline**) is an exquisite example of Bauhaus design.



For the creative

This neon light (R3 599, **Scotch & Sofa**) is perfect if you’re looking to elevate your décor with something quirky.

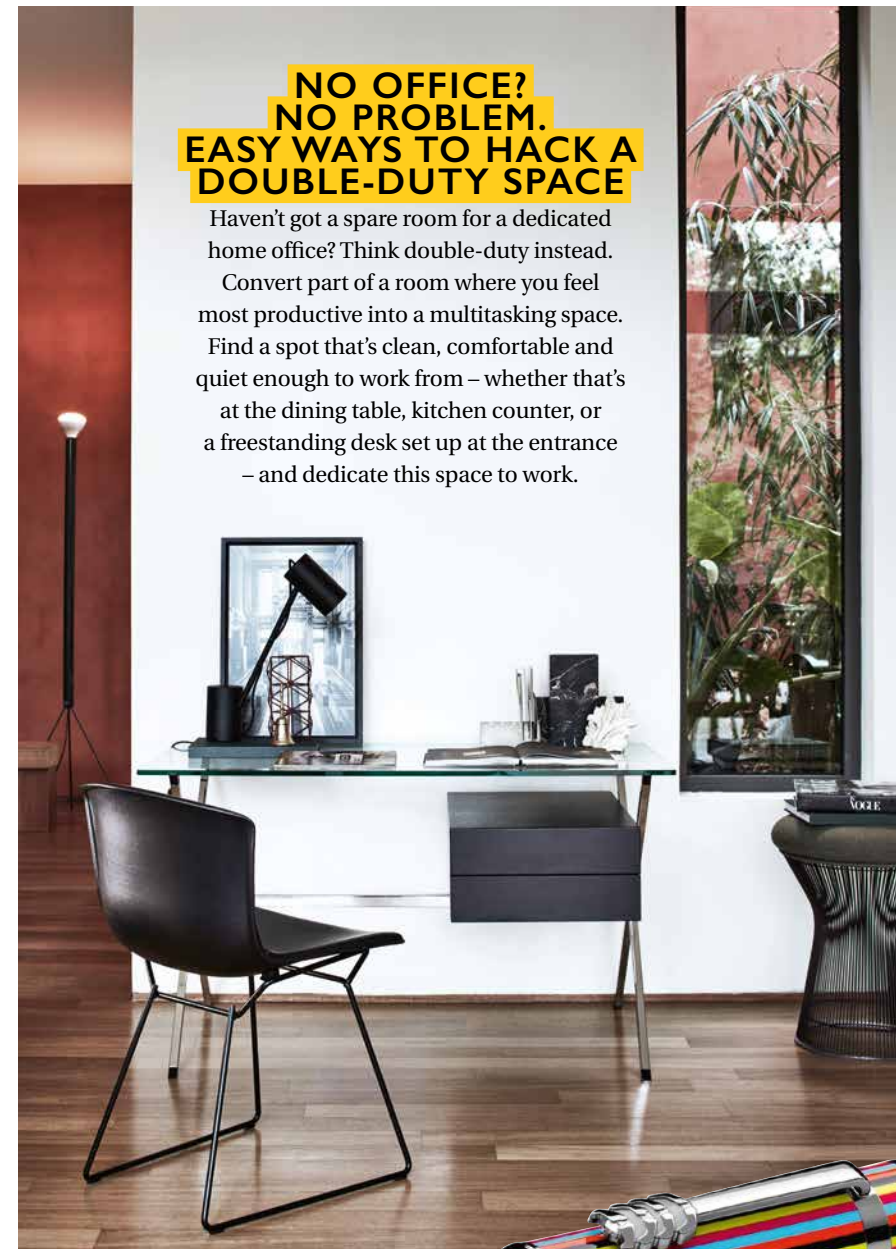


For the classicist

This mercury and glass table lamp (R1 799, **@home**) is the ideal lighting touch to any home office with serious décor ambition.

NO OFFICE? NO PROBLEM. EASY WAYS TO HACK A DOUBLE-DUTY SPACE

Haven’t got a spare room for a dedicated home office? Think double-duty instead. Convert part of a room where you feel most productive into a multitasking space. Find a spot that’s clean, comfortable and quiet enough to work from – whether that’s at the dining table, kitchen counter, or a freestanding desk set up at the entrance – and dedicate this space to work.



DESIGN ALBERTO VILLALOBOS OF AVILLALOBOS DESIGN. PHOTOGRAPH ERIC PIASECKI. BERTOYA SIDE ALBANI MINI DESK BY FEDERICO CEDRONE. COURTESY OF LIMELINE



Office stationery is a fun way to ensure your workspace nook is clutter-free. Curb the mess with pens and notebooks for jotting down daily tasks.

From top: Great Characters The Beatles Special Edition rollerball (R14 700, **Montblanc**); A5 notebook (R69.99, **Typo**) and Dual End Marker six-pack (R99.99, **Typo**).

the guide

THE GADGETS YOU NEVER KNEW YOU COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT

Solid tech, seamless connectivity, and a good pair of noise-cancelling headphones make for a stress-free work environment. Stop fiddling with random cables and invest in these smart gadgets instead...

Ahem, we’re looking at you, screaming kids... These Beoplay H9s (R9 999, **Bang & Olufsen**) are cool, comfortable and actively cancel noise while immersing you in sound.



Forget dragging a knot of cables wherever you go. Connect and sync all your tech with the super compact QDOS PowerLink Combi (R999, **iStore**), an eight-in-one multi-port USB-C hub.



Finally, conference calls from anywhere! Yup, we’re talking about the sleek Beosound AI speaker (R5 999, **Bang & Olufsen**).



DECK THE WALLS

If colour scares you, consider introducing art instead. It can help to inspire, reflect and stimulate creativity. Hang a few pieces together according to your taste, or prop an artwork against the wall for an instant WFH office feel. **Bonus:** simply switch them up when you feel like a change.



Left: A3 Space Rebel Watermelon (R380 without frame, R530 with frame, **Call Me Ishmael**).



SAY HELLO TO THE CLOFFICE

What is it, you ask? Simply put, it's the new cubicle. An office built into a closet – and an ideal solution for small homes. It's also a great way to enjoy a dedicated home office if you're without a spare room but appreciate being able to close the door on your workday.

Pop It Like It's Hot

Kit your cloffice out in bright colour. Bold tones, like this blue used by designers Jordan Cluroe and Russell Whitehead of 2LG Studio (@2lgstudio), create depth and set the space apart from the rest of the room.

Shelf Life

The vertical height a closet offers is perfect for installing shelves, freeing up desk space.

Plug-In You're going to need a power connection, so consider adding plug points. Or opt

for battery-operated lighting – a great solution for adding light without the hassle of rewiring.

Ergo-nomics Install a desk suited to your sitting height and with depth sufficient for monitors or laptops.

Take A Seat

The right chair will provide good back support. If you can't close the cloffice doors with the chair inside, use this as an opportunity to shop for a statement piece to complement the rest of your room.

Which Chairs Are Best?

From left: Regency velvet office chair (R2 200, **Mr Price Home**); Ottawa dining chair (R17 141, **BoConcept**); KN06 armchair by Piero Lissoni (R24 500, **Limeline**); Hilton office chair (R3 799, **@home**).



3 TIPS FOR THE PERFECT ZOOM BACKGROUND

1. Avoid visual noise – it can be distracting. Simple wallpaper is a good way to personalise a background. Hertex Haus's grey woven peel-and-stick wallpaper (R1 299 for 52cmx5m, **Yuppiefchef**) makes installing a breeze.

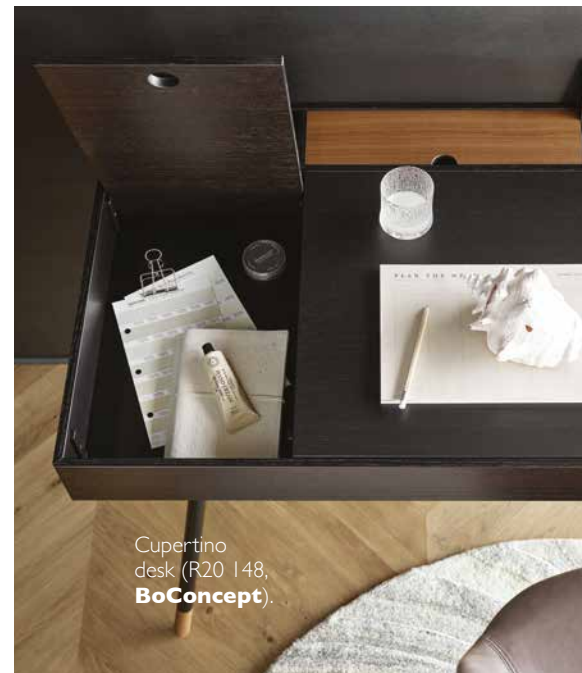


2. Add layers. Show off your style with books and bookends for that erudite touch.



3. Use uniform lighting. Clear visibility ensures you get your point across. The Godox LEDM 150 LED smartphone light (R1 199, **iStore**) has an adjustable brightness mode and L-shaped brackets offer mounting options.

DESIGN: 2LG STUDIO, PHOTOGRAPH: MEGAN TAYLOR, FROM MAKING LIVING LOVELY – FREE YOUR HOME WITH CREATIVE DESIGN, THE SEMINAL BOOK BY 2LG STUDIO, PUBLISHED BY THAMES AND HUDSON



Cupertino desk (R20 148, **BoConcept**).

THINK MULTI-FUNCTIONAL

Furniture should represent who you are and meet your needs as an individual and a professional. "Think about furniture as multifunctional pieces, not fixtures. It should be able to move around in the home to serve [you] exactly where you need it," says Charlotte Obidairo, managing director of BoConcept (@boconcept_official). A well-designed dining chair can double as a comfortable seat at a desk, while a desk can include hidden storage that's sleek and sexy.



WORKING FROM THE V&A WATERFRONT IS WORKING FROM HOME

Heads up digital nomads – why not make the V&A Waterfront home? Consider a long-term stay in one of the Breakwater or Portwood luxury apartments. Think deluxe living in a spectacular setting with the convenience of the Waterfront on your doorstep. Plus, all apartments come fully equipped and include free uncapped WiFi throughout, making working from the rooftop pool or answering emails in the gym a cinch. Want to work from, say, a coffee shop? All the V&A's indoor spaces have free WiFi. They say a change is as good as a holiday, and who doesn't like a holiday?



Digital overload equals eye strain and headaches. These UV 420 Blue Light Blocker glasses (R990, **Ballo**) are a great solution to combat the effects of living our lives glued to our devices.



Forget making multiple trips to the kitchen to keep hydrated. This nifty water dispenser (R299, **Typo**) comes in a variety of colours so you can personalise your space. Add ice to chill, and infuse with seasonal fruit slices and herbs, like mint or basil, according to your taste.

TAKE A MENTAL HEALTH DAY

Home schooling the kids? Dogs barking? TV too loud in the next room? Domestic 'bliss' can truly test our patience – and these daily stresses can lead to an ongoing cycle of worry and restlessness. Clinical psychologist Daniel Rabinowitz of Cape Town Psychologists (@capetownpsychologists) suggests the following:

Adopt a routine. Set a morning alarm and don't hit snooze. Plan your day and include social activities like dedicated time with family around the breakfast and dinner tables. Live alone? Schedule electronic meetings with friends.

Avoid cabin fever. Introduce short periods of outdoor physical activity to improve your state of mind. Set a time for scheduled treats, like a midday walk, or a socially distanced lunch at the V&A Waterfront with a friend.

Keep that water cooler vibe alive. Break the silence by setting up WhatsApp groups with colleagues. Interacting with others feeds the soul and allows you to keep that old office camaraderie alive.

Combat boredom. Keep things interesting by engaging your creative side. Tackle DIY projects, garden, paint or play a board game – these activities all create a sense of agency.

Try journaling. Jotting down your anxieties helps acknowledge uncomfortable feelings and regulates your emotions and sense of purpose. Alongside negative thoughts, write down alternative, more balanced ways of thinking. This helps you to focus on what you can control, instead of the what-might-happens. ■