



WORKING THE ROOM

Luis Hernandez, lead designer at Lewis & Co, on how to love your home office

Interview: Lauren Baino

Q: How did your approach to designing home offices change during the pandemic?

A: Aesthetically it didn't change much, but the focus became far more about comfort and relaxation than it had been previously. The move to working from home was not something the majority of people chose for themselves, and for most of us, it was a real challenge to create a productive work environment amid all that stress. One thing I began prioritising was uplifting scents in the form of diffusers and candles, working with clients to choose a note profile that made them feel at ease. As with all aspects of design, this has to be personal.

Q: Now that flexible working is here to stay, what more can we do to distinguish the office space from the rest of the home?

A: I always recommend that home offices are kept as neutral and light as possible. Psychologically, a light wall colour will help to keep the space energising and conducive to productivity. Brighter or darker colours can elicit different moods, so if you have these throughout your home, the shift in colour scheme when entering your office space can help your mind disconnect from the stressors and distractions of your home life. I also encourage a theme of simplicity and order in the office



décor, with a few personal items to keep you grounded, but not so many that it becomes distracting. A bench is a great way to introduce some ‘secret storage’ into the space, which can also double as seating with the addition of a few throw pillows.

Q: What is your advice for someone whose home office shares an existing space, like a spare bedroom or living room?

A: You may need to reorganise the room as a whole, as opposed to simply inserting a desk and a chair where there’s space. Consider positioning the desk under a window wherever possible, to allow yourself to benefit

“Consider positioning your desk under a window, to benefit from the natural light and provide a reminder of the outside world when you’re chained to your desk!”

from natural light – and provide a reminder of the outside world when you’re chained to your desk! Reorganising the room will also allow you to be mindful of what remains visible behind you during virtual meetings.

If you have the space, I would recommend installing a folding screen between the two areas, as it works to separate the two parts of your life and can also eliminate the need to reorganise the rest of the space. If this isn’t a possibility, a rug in the office space can have the same psychological effect. Also, make sure you have a lamp specifically for your desk area, and don’t rely solely on existing ceiling lights, as these may not distribute light appropriately in the new floor plan.

Q: What are some often overlooked home office essentials?

A: The first thing that comes to mind is a wall clock. These are frequently used in traditional offices, and function to keep you aware of when to take a break, when to eat and when to clock off. When working from home, these moments can very easily become absorbed into the existing rhythm of the household, but having a constant visual reminder of the time can help you develop a more structured work day. Also, a splash of greenery on the desk always helps – even if you’re not good with plants, a robust genus like a ficus will pay dividends in stress relief.

Q: I only have time to change one thing in my home office. What should I choose?

A: Definitely your office chair. When the shift to home working began, most clients co-opted chairs from elsewhere in the home, such as dining chairs or armchairs, but none of these are suitable long-term solutions. Invest in an elegant, comfortable desk chair – your back and your mind will thank you for it at the end of a stressful day.

LEWIS & CO
54 Paddington Street,
W1U 4HU
lewisandcompany.co.uk ■