

Tips for Creating a Successful Workspace

In this document you will find 6 tips to create a workspace that can help you feel more comfortable, happier, and more productive:

1. Consider your current workspace capacity and flexibility
2. Consider your work needs
3. Designate a specific workspace
4. Evaluate your chosen workspace for potential benefits and hurdles
5. Create a space you will love
6. Keep it organized



Research shows that the hours we spend in our workspaces greatly impacts productivity, happiness, and even our health. Even the smallest features of your workspace—such as the position of your monitor or the height of your chair—can have a huge impact, check out our 6 tips for making your most ideal environment.

1. Consider your current workspace capacity and flexibility.

Take an inventory of your current workspace, whether you're living at home with your family, in a residence hall on campus, or in an apartment off campus with friends, plan to have a discussion with others in your space about how you can communicate about and work with one another on schedules. Consider the following in your discussion:

- Your current schedule for class, classwork, and other commitments.
- What you need to have during your class and work time.
- Expectations for others in your space.

Tips for discussion: construct an outline of the amount of time that you will need for your coursework and the

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types of tasks you will go along with your coursework. Example: Quiet space for class discussions.

Tips for overlapping schedule: You may find that your roommate or family member has an online class or meeting at the same time as you, or both you and your sibling share a computer and have class at the same time or share bandwidth. While such overlapping schedules may reduce temptation to procrastinate and socialize with one another, they may also create potential challenges in terms of internet or technology access and use.

2. Consider your current work needs

Now that you have your schedule set, you can choose a workspace. Before selecting a location, consider what type of course work you will be doing. Do you need a desk or table, a computer, a worktable, space to take notes or write out equations? Consider the following:

- Does the space allow you to keep your learning materials close by and organized so you can easily attend class or complete an assignment? Examples: Pens, Pencils, Paper, Phone or Laptop Charger and Cord, Calculator.



3. Designate a specific workspace

Having a dedicated space to set up your workspace is a strategy that can help you be a more successful learner. If it is possible you should try to set up your specific space that will have all of your work materials ready to go.

- For many, this will not be possible. Instead try keeping your materials together, either in a box or backpack, so you have a mobile workspace that can support you no matter where you work. Consider also having a technology box for easy access for setting up your workspace.

4. Evaluate your chosen workspace for potential benefits and hurdles

When creating your workspace, consider the types of environments that allow you to do your best and also any types of environments that tend to make focusing or working a struggle. It is important to define what helps you succeed as well as what may distract or hinder you. Consider the following:

- *Do a self inventory:* Do you need privacy? Can you work with background noise? Do you need to have access to snacks easily? Does it have street noise, a tv, or other constant source of distraction or procrastination?

- Ask yourself what in your potential workspace matches your inventory list from above? Does the space allow you to be comfortable as you do your work? Will you feel motivated in the space? If it does not, can it be modified?

If the space is not comfortable or could be prone to distractions or issues, is there a way for you to modify the space to be more comfortable and less distracting?

A quiet space is ideal for engaging in online classes, but if background noise can not be avoided, remember to mute your microphone and make visible cue cards that you can have nearby in your workspace to notify those around you that you are in class.

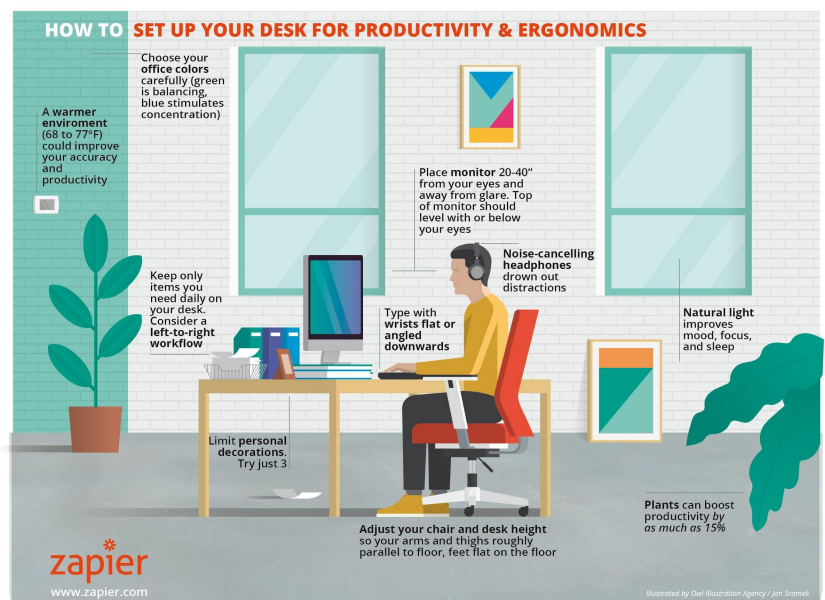
5. Create a space you will love

Above all, it's important to find a workspace that you will enjoy spending time in and will create a positive and happy association for you. You are more likely to have better academic experiences if you are happy and inspired in your workspace. Consider the following:

- Make sure you have good light. Natural light is best! Set up near a window if possible. Light impacts your alertness, mood, performance, mental effort, headache and eye strain, fatigue, and general well being.
- Your chair is King. Can you find a supportive and ergonomic chair that allows you to view your computer at eye level?
- Consider your ideal temperature. Is the space too hot or too cold? Add a standing fan, a space heater, or your favorite blanket to make your space feel just right.
- Consider Sound. You may find some sounds are helpful to you while you work, such as music on low, while other sounds might cause you to feel distracted or irritated. To help with the noise, consider noise cancelling headphones.
- Brighten your space with items that bring you joy. Add a few items, including greenery, your favorite picture frame, a piece of art, or other items that bring you joy. Just make sure not to add too many.

6. Keep it organized

Having an organized plan to keep your workspace clean and uncluttered will help you succeed as you manage your time and coursework. Whether your work is



in-person, blended, or fully online, your work, notes, and resources might begin to pile up and crowd your work area if you do not stay organized. Consider the following strategies:

- Designate a shelf, drawer space, box or basket for each of your courses. Make sure that you label each space. This will make it easy to find what you need when you are looking for that specific course.
- Develop strategies around your state of mind for each of your courses. For each course, in addition to needing different resources, you may need to mentally prepare differently with regard to the nature of the class or how you tackle the work.

For example, getting dressed for an online class just as you would for an in-person class may help you mentally prepare for engagement.

Or 15 minutes before class starts, scheduling in time to get your work space ready, to test technology, and get your cup of coffee so that when the class goes live, you are ready to engage. Figure out what works best for you!

