

15 Steps To Optimise Your Workspace For Productivity And Creativity

We believe your environment dictates your performance and studies have shown that dialling in your workspace has very real neurobiological consequences for productivity and creativity too.

Every distraction, whether it's food, people, noise, your phone or your smartwatch is a major productivity killer. Preventing these distractions requires you to actively suppress impulses, and in doing so you're sapping your cognitive resources.

So here are the Top 15 Steps to optimise your workspace at the office and when working from home. The more of these you can implement the more you'll increase your output, productivity and overall happiness.



1

Location Matters

Avoid working in environments that are not 'fit for purpose' such as coffee shops or restaurants - these environments are like a distraction superhighway!

2

Smooth Is Fast

Start as you mean to go on! If you can create a workspace that requires minimum 'set up' each day' then you'll slide into productivity much faster. Aim to use the same desk, the same computer, the same everything!

3

F*ck Off, I'm Working

Get a pair of noise cancelling headphones. Not only will they eliminate the sound distractions at the office or home, they'll also signal to others that you do not want to be disturbed!

4

Streamline Your Tech Stack

Just have one fast computer with a wireless keyboard and mouse, one monitor and one phone. No other gadgets - you don't need them, they kill productivity and creativity!

5

Your Phone...

Ready? This can be really tough for many people but... Switch your phone to 'Flight Mode' and put it out of reach when you're working. You can do it! Create a schedule so you can batch checking your email and engaging with social media.

6

Guard Your Environment

Keep it simple...

- Orientate your workspace to minimise constant 'people' distractions such as a thoroughfare in front of your desk
- If you're working from home create boundaries so that everyone (including you) knows when you're 'working' or not
- Remove temptations. Don't sit near to a TV or yummy food and keep the pets out of your workspace (who can resist giving Fido a tummy rub!)

7 **Clean Leads To Clarity**

A messy workspace messes with your subconscious.... Keep your workspace clean and tidy to minimise cognitive distraction and make it easier to slip into productivity.

8 **Declutter to Deload**

Get organised and ensure everything you need is easy to find. Like a messy workspace, clutter creates cognitive load so, no deep drawers full of 'stuff', make those noise cancelling headphones easy to find!

9 **Light Up Your Life (Naturally)**

Of course, you've got to work with what you've got but, maximise whatever natural light you can. It increases energy, improves your mood and helps to align with your circadian rhythm.

10 **Be Cool**

This can be tricky in a big office but, where you can, aim for around 18°C/64F) for optimal performance.

11 **Get Good Furniture**

If you have control of what furniture you use in your workspace, treat yourself! Not only should it be ergonomic but you should 'like it', you should like the way it looks and feels.

12 **All Rise**

Whether sitting is really the new 'smoking' or not we don't know, but we do know that a standing desk is better for your physiology, promotes more movement and stimulates creativity!

13 **Go Green**

Be deliberate about adding more plants into your workspace. Not only do they help to purify and oxygenate the air you breathe, they have a calming effect too.

14 **This Makes Scents**

You can use your sense of smell to trigger productivity. Your brain associates certain smells with certain activities (e.g. your favourite food smells make you feel hungry) so use scented candles, for example, in your workspace to subconsciously slip into 'work mode'.

15 **Tune In With Tunes**

All of the major music streaming platforms have options for background rhythmic music. You specifically do not want music that has too much complexity or lyrics as this elevates cognitive load. Just stick some 'white noise' music on replay and off you go...

Remember, an optimised workspace lowers cognitive load, reduces neural friction and can help to eliminate distraction. So work your way through the list and make it a competition with yourself to see how many of these 15 tips you can use to optimise your workspace!

Handy Hint: Keep this list handy and come back to it regularly - there is almost always the opportunity for further fine tuning and finessing.