

WFH in style

Working from home is a skill that can be learned – and you need the right environment to learn in, writes **Trevor Crighton**



Cielo



Cielo

The three-letter acronym “WFH” (work from home) has become increasingly familiar to everyone over the last two years, so says Cheryl du Preez, visual merchandising co-ordinator at Cielo. “Whether it’s a little corner of the dining table, a nook under the stairs or an entire room, the WFH office has been well and truly test-driven. Working from home is a skill. At first, it can be difficult, but over time, with practice and some forward-thinking, you can create a highly productive and enjoyable work environment.”

The right space, though, requires the right equipment.

THE ESSENTIALS

Mari Kriel from Spaas Furniture says that the home office basics are essentially a desk (sitting or standing), Wi-Fi and a computer. “That’s it – it’s how I’ve set up my own home office – super-minimalistic, zero clutter and only the things you absolutely need,” she says.

The minimalistic approach works, but then those few essentials can still be both beautiful and functional. Du Preez says a desk should be versatile, the chair ergonomic, and your storage visually appealing. “The more comfortable we can be at our desks, the more productively we can work!” she says. “A good office desk offers health benefits, as well as gains in productivity. Happy people are more productive, and uncomfortable workstations can lead to you wanting to spend less time at your desk. Keep in mind that an ergonomic and adjustable desk is likely to keep you injury-free too.”

K-Mark MD Mark Vercueil says that a good office chair is essential. “Many companies have allowed their staff to take home their office chairs, as sitting on a dining room chair at a dining room table is not good ergonomically for your body,” he says. “Research tells us that the body can cope in a less than ideal position for up to two hours, but after four hours, it becomes critical to be comfortable at your workplace, or productivity drops enormously.”

BEYOND BASICS

Du Preez says that adjustable stand-up desks can help mitigate the health risks of sitting idle for too long. “Standing is a much more health-conscious alternative with many benefits,” she says. “Expert knowledge says what you need to aim for is movement. You should look to change your work position throughout the day – and an adjustable standing desk allows you to do just that.”

The need for good lighting – and plants – is something both Kriel and du Preez recognise. “Natural light is essential in so many ways – a recent study at Cornell showed workers exposed to natural light experienced an 84% drop in issues such as headaches, eye strain and blurred vision,” says Kriel. “Because those symptoms can lead to increased fatigue, workers exposed to less natural light were more susceptible to other health issues.” >



Spaas

Du Preez says that people tend to feel happier and spend more time in spaces where biophilic design – when nature is incorporated into building design – is prominent. “The easiest way to do this at home is through indoor plants. It’s also been found that having greenery in the office helps to replenish our attention capacity and encourage creativity.”

SETTING TRENDS

“We are seeing the demand for home-styled office chairs becoming more apparent,” says Vercueil. “For example, a tub-style chair with a designer look and feel that complements existing decorations in the home office is one of our go-tos”

A Scandinavian-style home office is an option for people with extraordinary thinking and a high level of creativity, according to du Preez. “Unusual features such as contrasts of black and white, the dominance of natural materials and a variety of wall and table décor – from pictures and posters to antique appliances, clay vases and straw baskets – are amazing.” 🏡

With thanks to Spaas Furniture, K-Mark and Cielo



Cielo



Cielo



Spaas



Spaas