

30 Tips to Choose Your Home Office Equipment



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30 Tips to Choose Your Home Office Equipment

Before you buy any office equipment, there is information about your space that you need to consider.

Circle the answers or highlight the items you want to refer to again.

Space

This will help determine the equipment as well as if you need a shared or separate room. Realizing what equipment or furniture you will need may determine what space you need.

Are you an artist, photographer, or crafter who needs extra space to work on projects or for special machines or light tables?

- Yes You might need space for an extra table or machine and/or supply cabinet
Consider a separate room.
- No You can use a shared room like a guest bedroom or shared office.

Are you a woodworker or painter or craftsman and need space to work on your project because it's messy or needs a large space?

- Yes You might need a separate room, a finished basement, or to rent a space

Would your business equipment / furniture be too big to fit into a 10x10 bedroom?

- Yes You may need to use two rooms, a basement, or rent space.

Will you have client meetings at your home office?

- Yes You need a separate room to have space and confidentiality for guests.
For guests, you will need chairs or a meeting table set.
- No You can work where you are comfortable if you live alone.
If you live with others, you need a room with a door and privacy to make calls.

1. Desk

Do you use papers and need workspace to spread out documents?

Yes You will probably enjoy having a regular desk with file drawers to store your paper project files in one file drawer and your action mail system, like my [Take Action File System™](#) in the second file drawer. I also recommend two supply drawers -- one for small supplies and a second drawer for letterhead, envelopes and paper pads.

No You will probably be fine using a computer workstation which usually has some slots for storage in an upper area.

Desks can be straight, a 90-degree angle (see cover) or U-shaped.

2. Hutch or Credenza

Are there things you want to reach conveniently like reference books or USB drives?

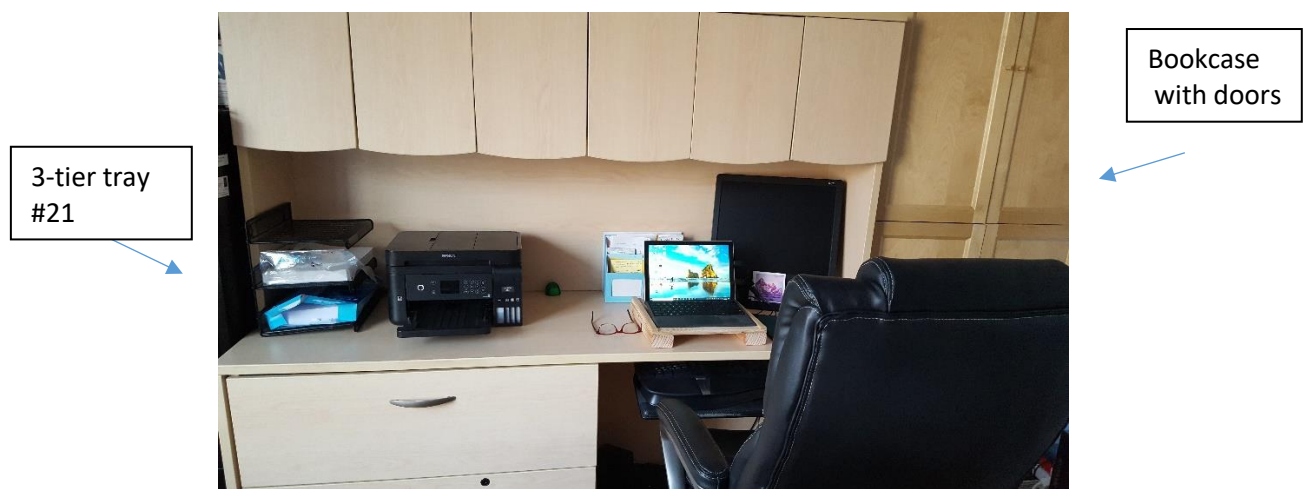
Yes You may want to have a hutch. It sits over a desk or computer table and provides small storage areas.

No As a startup you may not need these. However extra storage is always welcome.

A hutch above a desk can make some things convenient to reach while you are working – like a headset, reference books, boxes of labels, USB drives, etc.

Or you might want a credenza – a separate piece with doors and possibly drawers.

A third option is a cabinet or bookcase with doors so items are not visible.



#2 Hutch over computer table #3 Lateral file cabinet below table

3. Computer Stand or Table

Do you have a small space and need to utilize more height for your computer area?

Yes A computer stand / station utilizes height instead of width. It usually has a lower section for the keyboard and/or laptop, a higher one for a monitor and more slots to the side(s) for storage.

A computer table is just a flat table, (*see pic #2*) but it has the same concept in that the computer, monitor, and printer are all together. It is useful for two or three monitors. A six- foot table would also allow space for spreading papers.

Tip: Put a lateral file cabinet under half of the table. (*see pic under #2*)

4. Ergonomic Chair

Do you have an ergonomic chair?

The **most important item** to purchase after the computer is the chair. Ergonomic chairs are important for two areas: your back and your hands.

The chair should adjust in height from the floor to keep your arms at a 90-degree angle to the computer keyboard. A second adjustment for the back is preferable.

High-back executive chairs often do not have a back adjustment. The chair itself is fairly bulky as compared to a “secretarial chair”. So be sure that you have room to move the chair easily if it is between a desk and a computer area.

5. Computer or Laptop

Will you only be working at home?

Yes Consider a CPU which has more hard drive storage space than a laptop. However, there is always cloud storage.

No Consider a laptop over a CPU
– or
Have a desktop at home and use a laptop or tablet for travel.

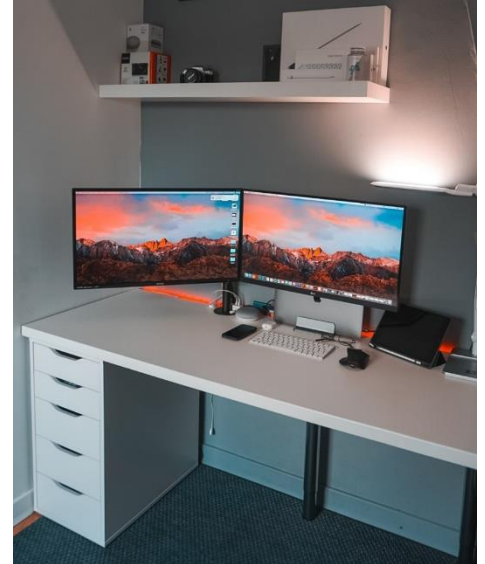
6. Monitors

Do you like to view several documents at once?

Yes Consider having 2 monitors to show different documents at the same time.

A good example of this is looking at email and another document you want to send or reply about content in the document.

Some people even use 3 monitors – this needs extra table space.



#6 dual monitors

7. Keyboard

Would you like to save yourself from possibly getting carpal tunnel?

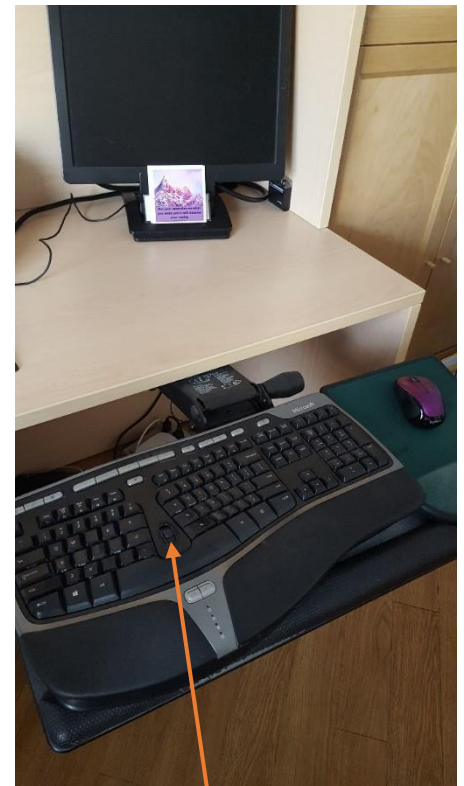
There is an ergonomic keyboard (*shown*). It's a bit different to operate and takes a bit of getting used to the position, but it's great for your hands to prevent carpal tunnel. The divided keyboard is easier to use than a whole keyboard.

8. Under the desk, pull-out keyboard tray

Is your keyboard on a table too high for your arms to be 90 degrees?

Yes Purchase an under the table pull-out keyboard tray. It's easy to install and will relieve you from keeping your arms in the wrong position. They are adjustable in height.

Note: You cannot pull it out with a center drawer in a desk.



#7 Split keyboard

9. Mouse and mousepad

Are you more comfortable with a mouse even if you have a touchpad?

Yes Then purchase both a good mouse and a mousepad. It's easier to move the mouse around on a pad.

Note: They also make mini mice for laptop travel. It's small but works great.

10. Color Printer

Are you going to sell products or do presentations?

The trend today is more professional and that means more color to documents not only on the cover, but also inside for the images. Social media and product images are also in color. So you will want a color printer to see how things look.

Plus any webinars or power point presentations are expected to have both text and color images as well as colored presentation templates.

You can always use more black ink for everyday printing.

11. Computer surge protector and cord wraps

Do you have a regular surge protector or one designed for computers?

This is a not a regular surge protector, and it **IS A NECESSITY**. Usually there is at least one that says “always on”. You don’t know when the weather is going to be bad and create an electrical discharge.

A friend of mine lost his computer, monitor and printer all in one bad storm. In fact, I recommend you pull plugs out during a bad storm. At the very least, turn them off. Better safe than sorry.

There are many different types of cord wraps. Ones where you can write the equipment name saves time when you need to find that cord. They are also great to take your computer to meetings or for travel to corral cords.

12. Modem and Router

You can buy your own or get them from your internet service provider. You do need an internet connection to do any type of business. You also need to have a working email.

13. Backup drives

Do you want to protect your information from being lost?

If something happens to your computer – it crashes or there is a severe problem, you want to have a backup. Your computer should be set to automatically backup daily.

You can get some backup with Google storage that is free. Then you can order more cloud storage or get portable backup drives.

14. Microphone – Studio Quality

Will you want to do webinars, seminars or courses?

You can start with your computer mic, but eventually you will need better quality for professional presentations, especially if your clients are professional business people. Some mics are

built-in to video camera programs, but a good standalone usb mic is recommended.

15. Video Camera

Will you do live presentations or recorded courses?

Most smart phones today come with a pretty good video camera, and many of your social media posts will probably be made with a cell phone camera.

However longer presentations like webinars, seminars, and courses are better with a video camera. You can even purchase one to sit on top of your laptop, if you need one.

16. Video Light Kit

Do you have enough light to shoot clear video?

Depending on the light in the space you are using, you will probably need a light kit to light you evenly. The more professional your client, the more professional you need to be. You may want a green screen too if your office is not presentable.

17. Cell Phone

In today's society, everyone is emailing and texting. A cell phone is a necessity for business. People want to reach you, especially if you are a local business.

18. Landlines (optional)

If you can afford a business landline, it is more professional. However it is not necessary. More people are using their cell phones as they have text on there.

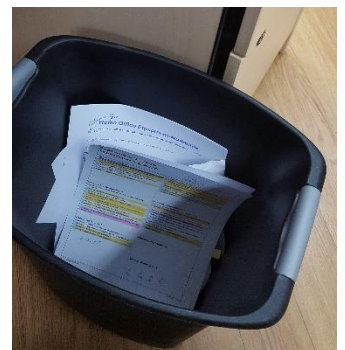
Note: Also look into a Google My Business listing.

19. Wastebasket

You can have one wastebasket for recycling and one for garbage. However, I recommend you keep just one wastebasket in your home office for recycling and take the time to walk into the kitchen to toss garbage. This is critical if you have clients come to your office so there are no smells in your home office.

Choose a rectangular wastebasket – not round. Paper fits better.

If you take the extra second to stand papers on end like a tall piece of paper, it will fit better than if you just toss things into the basket.



20. Paper Shredder

Do you get mail with confidential information on it?

Even if you just shred credit card applications (so no one else can sign up under your name and say you moved), it's worthwhile to use a paper shredder. There's so much mail with your information on it that you are safer shredding. Don't forget to oil the shredder.

If you rarely need one, then you might put documents to shred in a box or bag and take them to an office store for shredding. The store deducts the container you bring the papers in – a box or even a grocery bag, and you pay by the pound.

21. 3-Tier Tray

Where do you keep the copy paper?

A metal, horizontal rack can be used for: *(see pic under #2)*
1 package of 500 sheets of copy paper on the bottom,
letterhead and envelopes in the middle,
and paper mail on the top - until it's opened.

Then the mail docs go into your action mail system like my [Take Action File System™](#) to be handled when you're ready.

Whether you work a daytime job or it's just not your scheduled time to open the mail, it is very helpful to have a place to put the mail until it is opened and processed.

22. Bookcases or Bookshelves

Do you have many books or binders that you will use in your business?

If you have books for your business, you will probably want a bookcase or bookshelves. For tight spaces, you can use bookshelves on walls rather than bookcases.

However if you think you will have a lot of books, go for a bookcase because of the weight. Pay attention to the width of the bookcase. Two feet looks okay until you get home. It's too short. *(Take my word for that one. I like to keep the same type of material together and two feet is just not wide enough!)*

If you are a binder person, you can sometimes buy bookcases with doors so it's like a cabinet to keep them invisible. (Ikea) *(see right side of picture under Item #2)* Measure the shelf height before buying a bookcase to be sure binders will fit. Often only 2 or 3 shelves work for binders and the others are not tall enough. Binders and tall books need a minimum of 12" height to easily remove them from the shelf.

Caution: Watch out for edge "overhangs" onto the shelf below. Sometimes binders will fit, but won't come out easily because the height is blocked by the overhang. To remove the binder you have to angle it, which means removing several binders next to it. Basically, overhangs are inconvenient. Flat shelves with no overhang are best.

23. File Cabinets

If you are going to have paper files, you will need file cabinets. Most wooden file cabinets look nice but are not very deep so they don't hold much. Do not purchase a file cabinet that has less than 21" in vertical depth.

24. Bulletin Board or White Board

You may have certain items you want to post on a bulletin board. If you do use one, get push pins that will lay on their side when they fall and not look like a silver tack that falls with the head down and the pin up so someone could step on them. This is critical if you have children in the house.

Some people use white boards to plan their week, month, or large projects. They are erasable and come in various sizes. Measure the space where you want to hang it before ordering.

25. Wall Calendar

A wall calendar can be very convenient. It provides a quick glance at the current date or a date two weeks out without having to use your phone or open your online calendar program.

You may prefer a wipe-off wall calendar to see upcoming events or promotions.

26. Wall Clock

Just like a calendar, it's convenient to have a wall clock to quickly glance up, especially when you're on a zoom conference call and can't see the time easily. It's also a great reminder when you're recording a webinar or course module to see how much time you are spending or when you want to end a certain topic.

27. Tables and Chairs for Guests, Meetings, or Large Work area.

*Do you like to spread out over a large work area or have large documents like charts?
Will you have meetings at your home office?*

If you have frequent meetings, you will need at least two extra chairs unless you have a meeting table. Then you probably want to have at least four chairs around the table.

If you need more space, you can get a large meeting table in the room; and use it both for meetings and large projects.

While round makes everyone feel equal, I still recommend rectangular tables for more workspace. You lose too much space with round tables. The table could even be a fold-up table that you can put away when not in use. Look for a smooth surface; it's very important for writing.

28. Desk Lamp

Do you have enough light coming in to your office if you plan to work in the evening or for cloudy days?

No You may need to add a desk lamp and/or better overhead lights.

29. Charging Station

With some many electronic things to charge, a charging station may be just what you need to charge cell phones and tablets.

30. Coffee Warmer Plate

Do you like a hot drink while you're working?

I saved my favorite piece of office equipment for last. If you like a cup of coffee, tea, or hot chocolate at your desk; it's not fun to have it grow cold. I've always had one of these on my desk, even when I worked in an office building.

The small coffee warmer plate is great. Just be sure your cup has a fairly even bottom with a very small edge so it gets warmed by the coffee warmer. Both Amazon® and Bed, Bath and Beyond® currently carry them. They are also in more stores around the December holidays, sometimes as a gift box with a decorative cup and packages of hot chocolate and/or coffee.



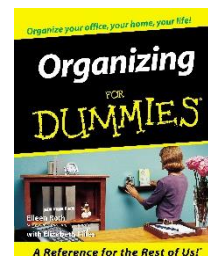
Happy Shopping!



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Eileen Roth *Your Organizing Tour Guide*



As the author of *Organizing For Dummies*®, Eileen Roth demonstrates how to be more productive, reduce your stress, and save time and money. Eileen named her company Everything in its Place® because she truly believes that you can find a place for everything.

Eileen is a national speaker, trainer and productivity expert in the areas of:

Office Organization
Time Management

Home Organization
Student Organization

She helps people learn how to put everything in its P.L.A.C.E.™ This reduces stress and people find things WHEN they need them. In fact Eileen Roth's organizing principles are simple to remember, easy to implement, and maintenance is minutes a day to stay that way.

Eileen Roth's background stems from over 15 years in office and association administration. Clients include corporations, associations, and research facilities such as: Argonne National Labs, Northwest Airlines, the Paper Industry Manufacturer's Association, Wisconsin Bankers Association, ABA-New England and TAP Pharmaceuticals.

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