

Choose a space that provides privacy and plenty of natural light.

MARTA MITCHELL INTERIOR DESIGN

Designing A PRODUCTIVE HOME OFFICE



Marta
Mitchell

Since Covid-19 changed many employees' work environment, *Triad Business Journal* asked Greensboro-based Marta Mitchell Interior Design to provide tips for creating the perfect home office. If you're trying to establish a productive workspace or staging your home for sale, check out the firm's insights below.

10 TIPS FOR THE IDEAL HOME OFFICE

► **LOCATION:** Choose a space in your home that provides some privacy and good access to natural light. Choose a space that gives you enough room to move. Nothing is worse than feeling cramped and locked into a dark corner.

► **DESK CHAIR:** It is crucial to have an ergonomic chair that will keep your body comfortable. One of the biggest mistakes people make when working from home is to "temporarily" use a dining room chair at their work area. This will lead not only to pain, but also to a lack of productivity.

► **DESK CHOICE:** There are lots of options from a simple table, a traditional executive desk, or a sit-stand desk which offers the ability to change positions and prevents fatigue. Whichever option you choose, make it a conscious decision based on your personal needs and your space restrictions.

► **TERRITORIALITY:** Create a space that is your own, that you love, that reflects your personality. Adding live or faux greenery will add calm to your space and a more relaxed atmosphere. Maybe allow for a pet-bed at your feet for your furry friend who is delighted to have you working from home.



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Choosing the right desk and chair are keys to the home office.

► **ZOOM CALLS:** In today's work environment, we need to account for numerous video calls. Remember that your professionalism (or lack thereof) will be communicated in subtle ways during these calls. Remember that these meetings are viewed just as if you were meeting at your company's office. So, plan accordingly by:

► **Create a clean, uncluttered, and professional backdrop** for the calls (this could be a clean wall with a piece of art, a bookcase with interesting books, or a view of the outdoors (even if in reality you are wearing pajama pants).

► **Make sure that your space is clear of potential distractions**, so plan ahead to have someone watch the kids if possible, put the barking dogs outside, and prevent your cat from jumping in front of the camera at your desk.

► **SOUND PRIVACY:** Be sure you can stay focused in the space. Noise cancelling headphones are great if you don't have a door you can close, plus they will help you stay "in the zone" listening to your favorite music.

► **STORAGE:** Provide your workspace with shelves with bins, as well as closed storage. This will keep your work surface clean; it will keep all your needed supplies at your fingertips; and it will allow you to quickly pack it all away at the end of the workday.

► **DESK ORIENTATION:** If possible, position your desk perpendicular to a window and in view of the office entrance – this will give you not only a view to the outside, but also prevent monitor glare and surprise visits from family and pets.

► **LIGHTING:** Task and general lighting are extremely important, especially with eye strain from the computer. Plan to have different points of control for lighting based on the task at hand.

► **COMPARTMENTALIZATION:** When working from home, it is sometimes difficult to separate work time life from home life. Develop physical routines to signal important timelines. For example: start the day by creating a summary list for the day's tasks. Put it front and center on your desk. This creates triggers for breaking for lunch, rather than just walking to the fridge for snacks throughout the day. And most importantly, make a clean break at the end of the day by clearing your desk in an organized fashion and shutting down the computer.