manor *the functional desk*

Office Organization Tips

A little sprucing up can make your workspace a whole lot better.

ORGANIZING YOUR DESK may not sound like much fun, but it's a necessary evil. That's because a clean and clutter-free space makes for easier work, experts say.

Darla DeMorrow, a professional organizer and interior designer, says a messy home desk means late bills, decreased productivity and even losing sight of the task at hand. "You start exploring something and then you can't follow through [because of disorganization]," DeMorrow says. "You don't know where all the research you gathered has gone."

Desk organization starts with evaluating your space, she says. Sort and purge, then analyze and decide where everything will go.

The one thing you don't need to do is rush out to the office supply store for fancy doodads, says Kathleen Luskus, vice president of the National Association of Professional Organizers. Look around your house first to find storage bins and other items that can be repurposed. "You can use a pretty ceramic cup that one of your kids made [to hold pens and pencils], or a basket or gift box to hold bills," she says.

DeMorrow also generally stays away from desk gadgets, but she recommends a quality vertical desktop file. Get one with a handle so it can be carried from room to room. Or try a wicker wall pocket for a useful and pretty accent.

Doing the initial organization is only the first part of the process. To keep an organized desk, it's important to stay on top of regular clean-ups and maintenance to avoid failing back into old habits. "It's really easy to lose control," Luskus says. "Commit to five minutes a day to the paper that has come into the house. That way, you'll stay ahead of it." *To find a professional organizer in the Philadelphia area, log on to Napo-GPC.org. —Mike Bederka*

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