

## WORKSPACES



### TOWER OF POWER

In next to no floor space, Ikea's modern version of the old-fashioned rolltop desk is an office and storage unit in one. [ikea.com](http://ikea.com)



COUNTRY ALMANAC  
1933-1934 Fall 2008  
**Home Office Anywhere!**  
**Small Room DECORATING**  
HOW TO LIVE LARGER IN SMALL SPACES

# Help, I need a HOME OFFICE!

Inventive tricks to install a home office—anywhere.

BY VICKI NORRIS



Organizing the home office is the number one request we get at Restoring Order®. That's because it's one of the most important spaces in the home! With all the responsibility, activities and technology we're trying to juggle these days, we need a dedicated space within the home to manage our personal and professional lives. Here are some ideas to carve out real estate for a home office, even if you have limited space:

### LOOK FOR UNDER-UTILIZED SPACE

Sometimes we overlook spaces we aren't using well precisely because they aren't working for us.

◆ If you have a wide hallway that seems

like wasted space, consider installing a narrow built-in desk (locate near electrical outlets or have them moved/installed).

◆ Make sure you've evaluated all your current rooms and spaces to ensure you're using them to their potential. Does your guest room or craft space really get used? If not, now is the time to take back territory!

### DIVIDE AND CONQUER

You can create a home office as one of several purposes of a larger room. For example, divide a guest room into two separate sections by using any number of room dividers: back-to-back bookshelves, ceiling-mounted fabric panels or screens.

**VICKI NORRIS, president of Restoring Order ([restoringorder.com](http://restoringorder.com)) is a professional organizer and motivational speaker, author of two books and a featured expert on HGTV's *Mission: Organization*.**

## SEPARATE ROLES

If there are two working adults in the home who need a workstation, you'll need office space for the two functions and/or the two people (not to mention the occasional visit from any resident teenagers). Instead of looking for enough real estate for an entire home office to suit *all* of your combined needs, look for smaller spaces that can accommodate more limited requirements. If you work from home, create a personal bill paying/household hub space in or adjacent to your kitchen to manage your personal life, and carve out a professional mini-office somewhere else. If both of you need an office landing spot, designate two separate "his" and "hers" office zones. Just be sure to take into consideration who is doing what: If dad pays the bills, the bill paying center should be in his zone, and if mom manages the family and filing, the file cabinet and family documents should be located in her zone.



**BOARDING HOUSE** Customize Pottery Barn's modular Daily System to suit your home's needs. Components, which include everything from basic boards to charging stations for electronic devices, attach to a metal rod so you can arrange as you like. [potterybarn.com](http://potterybarn.com)



## TAMING THE PAPER TRAIL

**W**hen we haven't prioritized having a dedicated home office within the household, paper and supplies and files nomadically wander. They cover surfaces, stack up in piles that are constantly being shifted, and they create confusion. It's hard to have effective household systems and family management without a home office or a household hub. Be willing to lighten up and let go. Perhaps this will require a little sacrifice, but it will help you get the home office you truly need. You'll be glad you did when your new office is humming with productivity and your home is a more sane and orderly place to be!

The Restoring Order® Reclaim Your Office® Collection features three key products that are *systems* that improve workflow. Each is made from lightweight aluminum and is powder-coated a metallic silver; these are lifetime products built to last. Their attractive, retro appearance is fun to use and blends well in any home or office environment.

With this collection, I don't want to simply crowd the

marketplace with more "product." Instead, I am setting out to end "office supply abuse" and offer smart, customizable systems that solve real-world problems like dealing with incoming paper, gaining supply storage (especially if your desk is a table!) and managing a multitude of projects at once.

### 1 The Project Center®

Use this incline sorter with removable dividers to manage pending projects—and keep them neatly in sight.

### 2 The Essentials Center®

This four-drawer supply organizer serves as a storage surface for a phone, computer monitor and more.

### 3 The Action Center®

A customizable, incoming paper processing system, this is equipped with any combination of five trays or drawers. All three of these products share the same footprint, so they can be stacked to maximize vertical space, which is a virtue in small office areas! Purchase these and others at [restoringorder.com](http://restoringorder.com).

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**COMMAND CENTRAL** A built-in desk and cabinets transformed this long, narrow former pantry, left, into a work center for a family of four. A wooden "window" opens to the kitchen for light but closes for privacy.

**CASE CLOSED** Ideal for narrow rooms, the Framed Secretary, below, is a modern take on a classic fold-down desk. Clearance underneath can fit a chair and offers handy storage space for files. [westelm.com](http://westelm.com)



Photo: Bill Matthews

### STEAL REAL ESTATE

- ◆ If you have an awkward storage area that isn't working for you, consider tearing it out and converting it to house a basic office.
- ◆ If you have a closet that isn't being used well (or if you could transfer the contents elsewhere), consider ditching the contents, taking off the doors, wall-mounting an office system and sliding in a rolling chair to create an office alcove.
- ◆ If you have a spot in your home that is a bump-out of some kind, hang a drape or install some bi-fold doors around it, and create a mini-home office. Look for these spaces adjacent to closets, stairways and the garage. A blueprint review can help you assess where you might steal a speck of space.

### LOOK OUTWARD

If you can't seem to find space for a home office, look to the outer regions of your home. Is there enough space in a basement or attic that you could finish? Can you take over the shed or another outbuilding? Generally, I advise people to keep their home office close at hand, but a professional work-from-home office can benefit from being located away from noisy activity. Another option is to relocate your guest room to an outbuilding



(the new "guest cottage") instead, and then take over the former guest space as your inside home office.

**OPEN FOR BUSINESS** Housed in a handsome solid-wood case, the Linear Office Armoire comes in a variety of sizes to suit your space. [roomandboard.com](http://roomandboard.com)