

Get your home office working for you



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CONFIDENTIAL

My office is wherever I happen to be, in the car, at home or the design office — basically, wherever my phone is. But it's hard to ignore how many in the work force are following the shifting trend to work part time or full time from home.

There are many factors that can help make your home office a productive and beautiful place to work.

Today's wireless technology in the house allows you to work from almost any room, but pick one and make it yours. I always recommend a home office be set up in a room with a door that closes and locks, rather than the dining room table or in an open concept loft or basement.

For business calls and for concentration it's best to have a door for privacy. If you need to share a space try to make it the guest room or a place that isn't occupied during the day.

The size of the room isn't as important as how functional it is. Organization is key and the way to stay productive is with proper storage. Having the right place to put everything can help contain clutter and keep your mind focused on what's important.

You'll need organization systems for paper and cord/cable management to tame that tangle under your desk. Many office stores carry organizational solutions for computers and supporting tech but I think custom built-in cabinetry is the way to go for storage.

Every need can be addressed and interpreted into good-looking, yet practical storage. After all, if you're

going to spend eight hours in a space, why not make it functional and beautiful?

Your personal style can carry through from the rest of your home to your office or you can create a unique, personal space that makes you happy just to be in it.

Good lighting is one of the most important considerations. There's no such thing as too much lighting, you can always turn something off. If you can, Invest in recessed ceiling lights for clear, ambient lighting and good desk lighting for task work.

Hire a designer to put together a lighting plan for you if you're not sure what you need. The second important factor to consider is your chair. Get the most supportive, comfortable seat in the house, because you will be in it a lot. That means no dining chairs!

An area carpet and drapery



PHOTOGRAPHY BY GILLIAN JACKSON

Many office stores carry organizational solutions for computers and supporting tech but custom built-in cabinetry is the way to go for storage.

may seem like overkill in an office but both will help dampen sound. You're still in a functioning household and sound travels both in and out of rooms, so remember fabric helps keep the noise level down.

If you're bringing in an electrician to update your lighting, ask about having some of the room's wall outlets raised to counter height so you don't have to crawl under your desk

to plug in your computer.

If you still work with a lot of paper (like me) you need space to spread stuff out. A computer is one thing — or maybe two things, you require for your job but a stretch of counter space can make life much easier.

Many home offices integrate counters with cabinetry to eliminate the stand-alone desk. Whatever works for you is the right solution. But my

last piece of advice is the most important to remember.

The best way to tame that paper pile is to tackle it and let it go, so get a high quality paper shredder and don't forget to use it!

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New home gym delivers at virtually no cost



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Eight hundred and thirteen dollars ... and sixty cents to be exact. That's how much money I've flushed down the drain in the past year paying for a gym membership that I only used twice back in January, because of those "resolutions!"

On average, Canadians spend upwards of \$800 a year on a gym membership, and I'm going to venture to guess that a good percentage of those same people fall into the "never use

it" category just like me.

My biggest excuse for not going more often is sadly the most commonly pathetic one: Time, or lack thereof.

I know, I know... excuses, excuses.

So, I recently decided that if I couldn't make the time to get to the gym, I'd bring the gym to me! And I had the perfect space to create one.

With two tweenage boys at home, they had completely outgrown what was once their toy filled/joy filled (albeit cluttered) playroom, and instead they now prefer to bury their faces in electronics for as long as we'll let them.

Subsequently, the playroom had sat unused for about as long as I've been paying for that "never use it" gym membership, and the furniture, electronics, and toys were simply taking up space!

I devised a plan to transform the playroom into a home gym by posting and selling our gently used contents on the Kijiji app, and once everything was sold, I planned to use the earnings to shop for second-hand furnishings and gym equipment to create the space.

After only a few weeks, I had sold almost everything. The futon for \$80, book shelves

for \$100, a gaming system and video games for \$125, and the drum set for \$200.

With the addition of books, toys, and a chest of outgrown dress-up costumes, I made a whopping \$712. Not too shabby for items that we didn't use anymore.

With a stack of cool cash in hand, I then set out on a search to find some gym equipment and furnishings to create my dream home gym,

Fun Fitness Fact: From January to July 2018, there were 33,874 treadmills, 11,074 dumbbells and 20,153 elliptical listings on Kijiji, and there was definitely no shortage of options when I started my shopping search on the app.

I found a weight bench for \$30, a set of hand weights for \$25, and a brand new treadmill with the tags still on it for \$175. I looked-up the model online before purchasing it second-hand, and it was listed at a local retailer for almost \$800.

Considering that the average Canadian saves about \$825 a year by shopping in the second economy, I was feeling pretty good about my over \$600 savings on the treadmill alone.

I really wanted to maximize functionality by adding storage in the space, so I also purchased a few additional second-hand furnishings including a set of cherry cabinets and



Designer Leigh-Ann Perrault devised a plan to transform a playroom into a home gym by first selling its contents and then shopping for second hand gym equipment.

an old metal locker, because every true gym needs a locker.

The cabinets got a fresh coat of Chalked Paint in "Lake Blue" and now hold all of my craft materials, and the once rusty locker was cleaned using "The Must For Rust" gel, painted with a sleek coat of Tremclad metal paint in gloss black, and now holds all of my wrapping paper rolls and gift bags.

After investing in paint and materials to make over my thrifty finds, plus using a roll of low tact tape and left-over paint to create a cheap and cheerful DIY geometric

mural, I spent a total of \$720.

Now, I'm no mathlete, but after earning \$712 and spending \$720, that means my total gym makeover cost \$8! That's less than one per cent of what I was paying for my "never use it" gym membership. And I now have my home gym forever with no annual membership fee!

— Leigh-Ann Allaire Perrault is a self-proclaimed DIY ninja, design aficionado, lifestyle expert who runs her own company called Hue La La. Visit her at www.huelala.com.



After earning \$712 and spending \$720, the estimated total cost of this gym makeover is only \$8 — less than one per cent of an annual gym membership.