


Lighting should be considered early when designing a home office. *HÄFELE CANAD*

# UPDATING THE HOME OFFICE

## 'When it is inspiring, it encourages creativity and focus'

**LINDA WHITE**
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A well-designed home office greatly influences your productivity, creativity and overall comfort, so if your space is lacking, it may be time for an update.

"For many people, the home office did not begin as a fully planned space. It was a quick solution, a laptop at the kitchen table or a quiet corner that worked just well enough," says Earl Ducharme, president and managing director of Häfele Canada, a global leader in architectural hardware, storage and lighting.

"Today, with hybrid work firmly part of everyday life, that expectation has shifted. A home office needs to stay organized with minimal effort, support focus and feel comfortable to use for extended periods," he says.

A thoughtfully designed workspace directly impacts how you think, says Jessica Cinnamon, principal designer and founder of Toronto-based Jessica Cinnamon Design Inc. "When a space is functional, it removes small daily frustrations like clutter, poor lighting or uncomfortable seating. When it is inspiring, it encourages creativity and focus. The balance of both is what you should strive for."



Jessica Cinnamon, principal designer and founder of Jessica Cinnamon Design Inc. *SUPPLIED*

### FUNCTIONAL, INSPIRING

Creating a workspace that's both functional and visually inspiring is less about following strict design rules and more about understanding how you live and work in the space, she advises. Before dreaming about how the space will look, Cinnamon recommends thinking about how it will work.

"Place your desk where you can benefit from natural light, but not where it hits your screen directly. Pay attention to how you move through the space, even if it's just a corner," she says. "You should be able to reach what you need without constantly shifting things around. When the layout feels easy and open, the whole space works better."

Choose the right desk and chair. "Scale matters most here. A desk that's too small quickly becomes cluttered, while one that's too large can take over the room," Cinnamon says. "You want something that holds your essentials comfortably without crowding you. The chair is just as important. It needs to support you properly, but it can still feel like it belongs in your home. There are great options now that balance comfort with a softer, more residential look."

Home offices are shifting away from stark and minimal, Cinnamon notes. Spaces feel warmer, more layered and more connected to the rest of the home. "The goal is to create something that feels lived in and comfortable, not separate or overly corporate," she says.

"At the end of the day, your office and workspace should support how you want to feel when you sit down. It doesn't need to be large or perfectly styled, but it should feel considered."

Ducharme says he's seeing a clear move away from bulky desks and visible storage toward more integrated solutions that keep everything in place without taking over the room. "Clean layouts, built-in shelving and multifunctional work areas allow the space to function efficiently while still feeling connected to the rest of the home," he says.

### PLAN STORAGE

Avoiding clutter remains one of the biggest challenges, especially with cables, devices and paperwork accumulating quickly. "Planning storage around how the space is actually used makes a noticeable difference," says Ducharme. "Drawer organizers, concealed charging areas and built-in cabinetry help keep everything contained while still within easy reach."

Many home offices also need to transition between focused work, video calls and general household use, he notes. "Storage that can be closed off or tucked away, such as behind pocket doors, helps the space adapt without feeling crowded, particularly in smaller rooms."

One of the biggest challenges is creating a workspace within an existing room. "If you're working in a corner, treat it as its own zone," Cinnamon says.

"Start with a desk that fits the space properly, then build around it with a rug, lighting or even a subtle shift in wall colour or texture. It doesn't have to be dramatic; just enough to define the area."

## Let there be light

Lighting should be considered early when designing a home office so it's positioned where it's needed, not treated as an afterthought, advises Earl Ducharme of Häfele Canada.

"A mix of task lighting and softer ambient light typically works best, making it easier to focus without creating a harsh environment. Integrating lighting into shelving or cabinetry can also improve visibility while maintaining a clean, streamlined aesthetic," he says.

Features like tunable white lighting allow the space to shift with your routine. Cooler tones can support concentration during working hours, while warmer tones create a more relaxed atmosphere later, Ducharme explains. "This approach follows natural daylight patterns more closely, helping to support the body's circadian rhythm, which influences focus, energy levels and sleep."



Decorate your home office with a few meaningful pieces that inspire you. *JESSICA CINNAMON DESIGN*



Häfele Canada develops solutions based on how people use their spaces, so everyday items can be kept within reach but out of sight when not in use. *ALEX LUKEY*



Adding texture through textiles, wood or natural materials helps soften the space and makes it feel more inviting. *JESSICA CINNAMON DESIGN*