

Home office: How to make working from home work

IS IT ME, or, as the pandemic slowly whimpers away, are you, too, hearing those who have been cooped up working from home chanting: There's no place like the office, there's no place like the office?

Although the perks of working from home are real—zero commute, less money spent on gas, less time figuring out what to wear, easy refrigerator access—so is the struggle. The dogs time their bark fests for when you're on a Zoom call. Your bored neighbor lies in wait for the moment you go out for the mail to ensnare you into a conversation about her crabgrass. Your partner eats the leftovers for lunch that you had your heart set on. And, face it, the gossip in the



AT HOME WITH
Marni Jameson

home office is subpar.

Over the years, I've had it both ways. When I had to go to an office, I wished I could work from home. When I had to work from home, I longed for a real workplace. Part of the appeal of a business office is

that it is designed for one purpose: to help you do your job. It's not designed to help you relax, cook, entertain, sleep, bathe or raise children. Professional offices typically have proper lighting, ergonomically designed desks and chairs, reliable Wi-Fi, ample storage, and the right vibe.

But what if your home office delivered all that?

"Great home offices don't happen by accident," says Chris Peterson, author of "Home Office Solutions: How to Set Up an Efficient Workspace Anywhere in Your House," out late last year from Fox Chapel Publishing. "They require an incredibly thoughtful process that goes well beyond deciding where the desk will go."

As the world creaks open, and more remote workers contemplate their workplace options, those who would like to keep working from home, at least some of the time, would do well to take a leaf, or maybe a few chapters from Peterson's book.

I recently chatted with Peterson, who was working out of his 900-square-foot townhome in Ashland, Oregon, about how we can make working from home work better:

Marni Jameson: *How did you become a home office expert?*

Chris Peterson: I've worked in publishing for 35 years, mostly writing about home improvement. I worked on Homeowner Magazine and have written DIY books for Black & Decker, including a series on how to build a home addition.

For the last 15 years, I've worked full time from home. In that time, I

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Making Home Work Converting a closet into a home office is one of many creative home office solutions author Chris Peterson covers in his newest book. Photo courtesy of Fox Chapel Publishing.



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