

# Everything You Need to Set Up a Productive Home Office



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Working from home sounds like a dream, but it can be a daunting task if you aren't prepared. Here are many of the essentials that you'll need to stay productive, focused, and comfortable.

## Start with a Good Workspace

Before we look at keyboards and office chairs, we need to mention the importance of building a good workspace and developing a productive schedule. It's hard to get yourself into the working mood when you're perched on a barstool in the kitchen,

for instance, and it's even harder to focus on work if you let yourself get distracted or neglect your physical, emotional, and social needs.

This can be a lot of different things, depending on who you are and what kind of work you do. It may mean eating decent meals or taking breaks to get some sunlight. Or, it may mean abandoning your bedroom and building a dedicated office space in the living room.

Anyway, we aren't here to give life advice, we're here to show off some essentials for your home office. If you're interested in learning about how to build productive work habits at home, check out our sister site, Lifesavvy, where we've published articles on [\*How to Work From Home and Actually Get Stuff Done\*](#) and [\*How to Set up a Great Home Office \(Even When You Don't Have Much Space\)\*](#). If you're working from home for the first time, these are must-reads.

Now that you're in the mind-set, let's look at all the stuff to make the work-from-home transition easier.

## **Your Chair Is Everything: The Furmax Office Chair**



Furmax

Nobody wants to spend 8 hours in a crappy chair. And while a fancy [Herman Miller](#) throne *would* be nice, comfortable options like the [Furmax office chair](#) are a lot more affordable. This particular office chair has some “gamer-chair” elements, like a breathable mesh back, a high headrest, lumbar support, and robust adjustment options that come in handy when you sit at a computer all day (trust us).

It’s worth mentioning that standing desk users should stick with standing desk chairs (which, yeah, sounds like the opposite of standing), [like the SONGMICS Balance Chair](#). This chair allows you to swivel a bit, so you don’t have to put *all* of your weight on your legs.

Your Chair Is Everything



**Furmax Office Chair Desk Leather Gaming Chair, High Back Ergonomic Adjustable Racing Chair, Task Swivel Executive Computer Chair Headrest and Lumbar Support (Black)**

The Furmax office chair is affordable and comfortable. It lifts some features from &quot;gamer-chairs,&quot; like breathable mesh and ergonomic elements.

## Get Yourself a Good Desk



Apexdesk

Desk shopping is oddly difficult. There are innumerable styles of desk to choose from, so instead of focusing on just one product, we're going to name a few options that might appeal to you.

- **A Budget Desk**: Sometimes it's good to have a small, focused, affordable workstation. This desk from Coavas is less than \$100 and is small enough to fit in a tight bedroom or the corner of a living room. It may be a good option for anyone who only plans to work from home for a few months.
- **An Old Fashioned Desk**: If you're a fan of big ol' chunky desks with lots of drawers, then this old-fashioned desk from Sauder is for you. It's got that sleek antique look, and it even has a keyboard drawer.
- **An L-Shaped Desk**: L-Shaped desks increase your workspace and work well with multiple monitor (or just plain messy) home office setups. This particular desk from Mr. Ironstone works well in the center of the room or in a corner and has more leg space than similarly priced options.
- **A Sit/Stand Desk**: If you're worried that working from home will turn you into a hermit with terrible posture, then a standing desk is a good investment. This standing Apexdesk has a built-in electric riser for height adjustments (including sitting when you need a break from standing), an ergonomic cutout for your body, and built-in cable management cut-throughs.

Now that you're set on a good desk, let's move onto essential hardware like keyboards and mice.

## **Comfortable, Functional, Wireless Keyboards**



## Microsoft

A high quality wireless keyboard is more useful than you'd expect. They're quiet, comfortable to type on, and a lot less messy or fragile than their cheap wired counterparts. Some of them even have special ergonomic designs, or the ability to quickly switch between machines.

Here are a few of our favorite wireless keyboards.

- **Logitech K780:** A solid mid-range keyboard (and a personal favorite of ours). It sports a slim design, a hinge for holding phones or tablets, and it can quickly switch between three machines with the push of a button. For reference, all of the Logitech keyboards in this list support [Logitech Flow](#), a software that lets you move across two computers as if they're simply two separate monitors.
- **Logitech MX Keys:** The MX Keys keyboard [is incredible](#). It charges by USB-C, it's incredibly comfortable to use, it looks great (illuminated keys!), and like the K780, it can quickly switch between three different machines.
- **Microsoft Sculpt:** A mid-range ergonomic keyboard that's sold with a wireless number pad. This is a solid option for anyone who does a ton of typing and is worried about their wrists.

- **Logitech ERGO K860:** A premium ergonomic keyboard that [encourages you to type without stressing your wrists](#). It looks great for an ergonomic device and comes with a large, adjustable wrist pad.
- **Corsair K63 Wireless:** This wireless mechanical keyboard is made specifically for gamers, but it works well for office workers who like the feeling of old-fashioned mechanical keys. The K63 has a built-in backlight and wrist rest, and it charges over Micro-USB cable.

Once you've picked out a good wireless keyboard, it's time to focus on buying a wireless mouse. Thankfully, there are fewer options to choose from. We've narrowed our sights on one particular mouse that offers everything you need.

## A High-Quality Wireless Mouse: Logitech Triathalon



Logitech

It's hard to overstate how nice the [Logitech Triathalon](#) mouse is. It's a major upgrade from similarly priced wireless mice and has a build quality that rivals some of Logitech's more expensive offerings. Like Logitech's keyboards, this mouse can

work with three different machines at a time and is compatible with [Logitech Flow](#)—software that enables you to move through two computers as if they're simply two separate computer monitors.

The Triathalon also has customizable gesture controls, a set of back/forward buttons, and a button that adjusts scroll speed.

If you're looking for a more robust version of the Triathalon, then we suggest using the [Logitech MX Master](#) mouse or the [Logitech MX Vertical](#) ergonomic mouse.

A High Quality Wireless Mouse



### **Logitech M720 Triathlon Multi-Device Wireless Mouse – Easily Move Text, Images and Files Between 3 Windows and Apple Mac Computers Paired with Bluetooth or USB, Hyper-Fast Scrolling, Black**

With its superb built quality, function buttons, and Logitech Flow capabilities, the affordable Logitech Triathlon is more than enough mouse for the average person.

**\$33.99**

[More offers](#)

## **Microsoft Teams, Slack, or Google Hangouts**





## Slack

Texting or emailing coworkers is a pain in the ass. If you need to network with coworkers while you're at home, it's best to do it over a dedicated chat client, like [Microsoft Teams](#), [Slack](#), or even [Google Hangouts](#).

All of these chat clients offer important group-work features, like file sharing and video calls. They're all available for free in some fashion, but they offer enhanced features and larger groups for paying subscribers. For what it's worth, Slack and Microsoft Teams are the best for quick text-based chats, while Hangouts is better for video conference calls.

Microsoft and Google [are currently offering some of their group chatting and video-conferencing suites for free](#) due to the spread of COVID-19 and the desire for some businesses to enact temporary telecommunications policies. This means that the [premium version of Microsoft Teams](#) (which includes Office 365 and cloud storage) is free for six months, and anyone subscribed to the [\\$6 per month tier of G Suites](#) will have access to 250-person meetings; 100,000 viewer live streams; and Google Drive meeting backups until July 1st, 2020.

# You Gotta Have Some Music!



Spotify, Pandora, Apple

Working in a quiet home sounds nice, but it's hard to get yourself hyped up for work without a bit of music. Really, music is an essential part of working from home. If you aren't subscribed to a streaming service, then now may be the time to test out a free trial.

- **Spotify:** One of the most popular music streaming services on the planet, Spotify starts at just \$10 a month and offers a \$5 per month [students plan](#) and (oddly enough) a \$15 [family plan](#) for 6 users. Spotify also offers an [ad-supported free plan](#).
- **Apple Music:** With its fantastic interface and support for the Apple Watch, Apple Music is perfect for anyone who is dedicated to the Apple ecosystem (it works on Android and Windows devices, too). Apple Music starts at \$10 a month, or \$15 a month for a 6-person family plan. Apple offers [a \\$5 per month plan for students](#).
- **Pandora:** A great service for people who like to discover new music without wasting a ton of their time. Pandora is easy to use, and has [three different plans](#): a free ad-supported tier, a \$5 per month ad-free plan with unlimited song skipping, and a \$10 per month plan with unlimited offline listening and extra playlist features. Students can grab a Pandora Premium subscription [for just \\$5 a month](#).

- **[YouTube Music](#) and [Google Play Music](#):** YouTube Music is new and easy to use, and the service costs just \$10 a month. Google also offers a \$15 per month family plan (for 6 users), or a \$5 per month plan for students. (These discounted plans are available on the [YouTube Music signup page](#)). GPM and YouTube Music come together, so if you subscribe to one, you get both. They also include YouTube Premium, which removes all in-video ads on YouTube. Come for the ad-free experience, stay for the music.
- **[Tidal](#):** Tidal boasts near-lossless sound quality for its tracks, making it a solid option for audiophiles. Tidal starts at \$10 a month and offers a \$15 per month premium plan for near-lossless FLAC streaming. [Tidal offers these plans to students](#) for \$5 and \$10 respectively.
- **[Amazon Music Unlimited](#):** As a Prime subscriber, you can sign up for Music Unlimited for \$8 a month or \$79 a year. It's a decent low-price option, especially if you use Amazon products like Alexa, Fire TV, or a Fire tablet.

These services are offered at similar prices and have similar features, so it's up to you to choose what works best. Remember, they all offer month-long trials, so you don't have to commit to whatever stands out to you first.

## **Audio and Video Tools: Headphones, Mics, and Webcams**



Logitech, Jabra, Audio Technica

Headphones are damn-near a necessity when you're working from home, especially if family members or roommates are present while you're at your desk. But because we're on the topic of audio, we're also going to cover microphones and webcams. These devices are often overlooked when people start working from home, but they're essential for professional video chats or calls.

Here are some of our favorite headphones, earbuds, microphones, and webcams. Keep in mind that some headphones and all webcams have microphones built-in:

- **Budget Headphones:** The [Philips SHP6000](#) wired headphones are affordable, comfortable, and high quality for the price. They're a solid option for anyone who wants to spend their workday listening to music without pissing off family or roommates.
- **Premium Wireless Headphones:** Audio-Technica headphones are known for their studio-quality sound and indestructible build quality. The company's [ATH-M50xBT wireless headphones](#) are a fantastic premium listening option, and they provide options for Bluetooth or wired listening experiences.

- **Cheap Earbuds:** If you're more of an earbud kinda person, then the affordable [Sony MDRXB50AP](#) bass-boosted earbuds may be your best option. They sound great for the price, and they have an integrated microphone to boot.
- **Premium Wireless Earbuds:** The [Jabra Elite 75t](#) wireless earbuds are [perfect for working from home](#). They sound wonderful, they fit like a glove, and their 7-ish hours playtime means that you can zoom through your whole workday without pausing for a recharge.
- **Desktop Mic:** Need a dedicated mic for meetings and video calls? The [Blue Yeti](#) is still [the standard](#). It's built specifically for your voice and is much easier to use than similarly priced alternatives.
- **Budget Webcam:** At under \$20, the [Logitech C270](#) is an incredible little webcam. It has a built-in mic and captures video at 720p, a fair resolution for professional use.
- **Premium Webcam:** If you need a webcam that can capture full HD video, then the [Logitech C922x](#) is your best option. It's small, it has two built-in mics with noise reduction technology, and it adjusts brightness and color automatically.

Alright, we've covered some home office necessities and creature comforts. Now it's time to focus on some of the items that you may already own, like routers and computers. We're also going to cover some basics that aren't worth their own 300-word section, like power strips and planners.

## A Good Router and Modem



Netgear, TP-Link

Working with slow internet speeds is a pain. But paying for a more expensive plan is rarely the solution to crappy internet. Instead, you should check what speeds you're paying for right now, and upgrade your modem and router to something that can actually handle those speeds.

This isn't the cheapest upgrade on the planet, but it'll save you money and time in the long-term. See, the modems and routers rented out by most ISPs are trash (though the modems provided by AT&T and Verizon are at least decent). They aren't fast enough to support the speeds of modern internet plans, and their wireless signals are totally unreliable. They're often rented out from home to home for \$50 or \$100 a year, despite being cheap and outdated.

Anyway, once you've checked the billing details from your ISP to see what speeds you *should* be getting (expressed as Mbps), you need to buy a modem that supports those speeds (or better). The [NETGEAR CM500](#) is a popular option, as it's affordable, it comes in a variety of speeds, and it's compatible with Xfinity, COX, and Spectrum. It also has a Gigabit Ethernet port for computers or routers.



Once that's wrapped up, you'll need a router. We suggest the [TP-Link AC1750](#), as its affordable, fast, built with Alexa capabilities, and compatible with [TP-Link Mesh Wi-Fi Extenders](#). It works at speeds of up to 1750 Mbps, so it should pair perfectly with just about any internet plan. If you're in a Google-centric house and need a good mesh system, [Nest Wifi](#) is another great choice.

## Treat Yo'self: New Computers and Better Screens



Acer, Dell

A new computer is an expensive investment, but the money you spend will save you from the frustration and embarrassment of an unreliable machine. If you don't already own a reliable computer, now's the time to buy one. It doesn't have to be a desktop, and it doesn't need to cost \$1,000. But it's your workstation, so it needs to work.

Here are a mess of computers in all sorts of form factors and price ranges. We've even included some computer monitors for first-time desktop buyers (or laptop

users who need an external screen), and an all-in-one desktop unit for anyone who wants to avoid the extra expense of a webcam, keyboard, mouse, and monitor.

- **All-In-One Desktop:** The Acer Aspire C24 desktop kit comes with everything you need to work from home. It's a PC with an 8th Gen i5 processor, 8GB of RAM, and a 1TB HDD, plus a 23.8-inch desktop monitor, a webcam, a keyboard, and a mouse.
- **Budget Desktop:** For just under \$500, the Dell Inspiron Business desktop packs an 8th Gen i3 processor, 8GB of RAM, and a 1TB HDD. It isn't the most powerful desktop on the market, but it's a great option for the price.
- **Premium Desktop:** The Dell XPS desktop computer is one of the best consumer-grade PCs on the market. It sports an 8th Gen i7 CPU, 16GB of RAM, and a 1TB hard drive. (It's worth mentioning that, at this price, you could [build a more powerful PC](#) than the XPS desktop.)
- **Budget Laptop:** If you're looking for an inexpensive laptop, then the Asus Chromebook Flip may be your best bet. It runs on the lightweight (and easy to use) Chrome OS, sports a 14-inch screen, and runs on an Intel processor and 4 GB of RAM (on a Chromebook, these specs enable you to put in a lot of work without any slowdowns).
- **Premium Laptop:** The Dell XPS 13 is one of the best Windows laptops on the market. Its 4K UHD touchscreen is incredible, and its 10th Gen i7 processor, UHD graphics, 16GB of RAM, and 1TB SSD make it faster than any other computer on this list.
- **Best 2-in-1:** Microsoft's Surface tablets are the best 2-in-1s on the market. They're super slim, powerful, and they run on Windows 10. The new [Surface Pro 7](#) is an especially tempting device, as it's built with a 10th Gen i5 processor, 8GB of RAM, and 256 GB of solid-state memory.
- **Budget Monitor:** Acer's 21.5-inch HD IPS display is super thin, super bright, and super affordable. At just under \$100, it's a fantastic option for most desks, and cheap enough to build an inexpensive dual-monitor setup.
- **Premium Monitor:** LG's 27-inch 4K UHD IPS monitor is prized among creatives and gamers, but it's also a solid option for anyone who wants to spend their workday staring at a modern, powerful display.
- **Ultrawide Monitor:** Ultrawide monitors make it easy to manage multiple windows (without buying an extra display). LG's HDR ultrawide monitor is a popular option, as its reasonably priced and comes in [29-inch](#) or [34-inch](#) flavors.

Again, any of the computers on this list should perform typical office tasks with ease. The extra horsepower of a premium option is only necessary if you're using



heavyweight software or if you're committed to buying a quality device that'll work like a clock for the next few years.

## Other Essential Products and Software



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We've covered just about everything that you need for a home office, from the desk to the desktop. But there are still a few small essential products and services that are worth mentioning. This is the kind of stuff that's easy to slip through the cracks, so take a quick peek to see if anything stands out.

- **[A Printer/Scanner](#):** The HP OfficeJet 3830 is an all-in-one color printer with scanning and faxing capabilities. It works wirelessly, or even over an app and is just under \$60.
- **A Hard Drive or SSD:** If you need local backups of your files, then grab an [inexpensive hard drive](#) or [super fast SSD](#).
- **A USB Hub:** Don't have enough ports on your computer? Pick up an [inexpensive USB hub](#), or a fancy [Thunderbolt 3 dock](#) if your computer has a Thunderbolt 3 USB-C port.

- **A Space-Saving Surge Protector:** Every home office needs a power strip. Or two. Or three—you get the idea, pick up a surge protector today to save yourself from outlet-hell tomorrow.
- **Smart Home Supplies:** As we mentioned earlier, [smart bulbs](#), [thermostats](#), and [plugs](#) can improve the quality of your work area, or automate your lighting and energy use.
- **A Good Planner:** It's hard to manage your work week with a planner. Get the job done with a [small monthly planner](#), or even a digital alternative like [Google Calendar](#).

It's also worth mentioning a few pieces of software that are useful while working from home. We've touched on cloud storage and document suites a few times in this article, but here's a more robust run-down with some useful and cost-effective options:

- **A Document Suite:** [Google](#) and [Microsoft](#) offer document editing tools for free, but they also offer premium document suits called [G Suite](#) and [Office 365](#). These premium suites come with things like cloud storage and group workplace features. If you're looking for a PDF tool, [Adobe Acrobat](#) is your best option (although Word and Google Docs can *kind of* edit PDFs).
- **Cloud Storage:** A cloud storage solution like [Dropbox](#) or [Apple iCloud](#) is essential for backing up and sharing documents. For other storage solutions, check our article on [5 Cheap Ways to Back up Your Data](#).

And that's that! We've covered a mess of products here, but they're all necessities that shouldn't be (but often are) overlooked while building a home office. Good luck with your new work-from-home adventure!