

desk for success

Colorful containers and smart wall storage help a busy magazine producer create a work zone that's stylish and efficient.



PROBLEM: Molly's desk was a mountain of files and fabric swatches. Her messy desk slowed her down and became an eyesore at one side of her bedroom.

SOLUTION: Professional organizer Kathy Jenkins of Come to Order (see bio in "Meet the Pros," page 24) helped Molly create a system that suits the way she works. "Molly likes her stuff out in the open—like many visual or right-brained thinkers," Jenkins says. "That's problematic in any home office, more so when it's in a room that's supposed to be your haven."

Because out of sight means out of mind for visual types like Molly, Jenkins recommended using closed storage only for things Molly would purposely look for, such as daily-use office supplies or mailing essentials. Important items she needs to keep on her radar, such as current project files and bills, remain visible in bright folders, labeled boxes, or clear bins.

To start the desk overhaul, Molly sorted everything swiftly into general categories marked by index cards—supplies, bills, current files, and magazines. But she hit a bump with a massive years-old paperwork pile. Filing everything would've taken hours, so Jenkins suggested stashing the paperwork in a banker's box (separating years by labeled sheets of paper) and storing it in the basement. "I file everything electronically anyway," Molly says. "The actual papers were just backup."

Tackling overflowing shelves was next on the agenda. Molly moved their contents onto shelves flanking the desk. Here, patterned-paper labels accent baskets, and document boxes gather similar items with flair. Even Molly's in-box is colorful—near a cute cookie jar full of notepads. Pretty vases on the bookshelves are placeholders for future storage. "Growth space is important to keep things organized," Molly says.

To eliminate desktop clutter and make use of available wall space, Molly mounted attractive bins on the wall above her desk, using plastic cups inside to categorize the contents. She also replaced one overloaded bulletin board with two giant framed boards—one for current projects and one for mementos.

"You work better if your space is uncluttered and beautiful," Jenkins says. "You'll be motivated to keep it up."



1. Matching bookcases flank the desk to create a pleasing, symmetrical composition in an office that's at one side of the master bedroom. 2. Labeled bins and boxes group similar types of items together and keep shelves neat. 3. Wall-hung buckets corral paint decks, markers, and other art supplies. 4. Open bins ensure fabric swatches and other frequently used items are easy to grab. 5. Two framed bulletin boards keep inspiration and current project notes within sight. 6. Boxes with windows provide glimpses of what's inside.

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