

Period Living essential guide

WRITING DESKS

Not just a place to work or write letters, a desk can be a beautiful addition to your sitting room, too, says **Maggie Stevenson**

Whether you work from home or just need somewhere to deal with your household paperwork, a desk will provide you with a designated space. Most of the designs you can buy will turn your spare room into an attractive study or home office but if you lack the space for that, there are plenty of desks in an array of styles handsome enough to fit into a family room, sitting room or even the bedroom.

In homes with smaller rooms or where a desk is needed only for composing occasional letters, a writing table is a good choice. Dainty and elegant, they have a surface on which to write or place a laptop and drawers underneath to hold stationery. Most come in styles inspired by European antique furniture but if you prefer a less feminine look, go for an angular design in dark wood like the brass-bound writing table overleaf.

When not in service as a desk, a writing table with its slender form can be used as a console or side table on which to put a lamp and display your favourite objects. If you need a desk that incorporates more storage, a bureau is a useful alternative.

These range from decorative writing tables with a

bank of shelves, drawers and cubbyholes above, to heavier pieces with wide drawers in the base, a fold-down or slide-out surface for writing, and a hinged or roll-top lid to cover the working area when it's not in use. Designs include painted desks in rustic, Scandinavian style or oriental-style lacquerwork, elegant curvy shapes and reproductions of traditional English antique furniture.

Kneehole or pedestal desks have a writing surface that bridges two sets of drawers leaving a space between so you can pull up your chair and fit your legs underneath. With an area large enough to hold a desktop computer and a generous amount of storage, kneehole desks are ideal if you work or study from home, but because they are bulkier than other styles, they are probably best reserved for a large sitting room or separate office. The main variation between designs is in the number and the configuration of drawers, whether the piece has legs or sits on the floor – the latter tends to have a more solid look – and the finish, which is generally painted or natural wood.

When you buy a desk make sure it will suit the way you live and work. From a practical point of view it should have a surface large enough to hold your computer and still have space to spare; and it should be the right height for comfortable working and have sufficient storage to keep all paperwork out of sight when it's not needed. And, to achieve just the right work/life balance, check the style, shape and finish complement your existing furniture and scheme. ▶



12 OF THE BEST WRITING DESKS





WRITING TABLES These dainty pieces look pretty in a sitting room or bedroom **1 Leksvik one-drawer writing table**, W119cm x D60cm x H74cm, £95, Ikea; **2 Classic writing table** with three drawers and upstand, W101cm x D53cm x H88cm, from £722, Leporello; **3 Apsley five-drawer desk** with brass fittings, W130cm x D60cm x H76cm, £699, John Lewis; **4 Allegra three-drawer desk**, W120cm x D65cm x H78cm, £540, Homes in Heaven

KNEEHOLE DESKS If you need more storage, choose a desk with deep drawers **5 William nine-drawer desk**, W150cm x D78cm x H80cm, £1,650, Oka; **6 Beijing six-drawer desk** with brass handles, W145cm x D65cm x H78cm, £875, Lombok (see page 45 for a 20% discount); **7 Henshaw pedestal desk**,



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W178cm x D83cm x H78cm, £1,100, Laura Ashley; **8 Champs-Elysees nine-drawer kneehole desk**, W140cm x D75.5cm x H81cm, £750, Juliettes Interiors
BUREAUX These desks have drawers and compartments **9 Bureau** with four drawers and internal compartments, W81cm x D49cm x H97cm, £1,245, English Home Collection, Leather Chairs of Bath; **10 Vintage Louis XV-style desk** with a single-drawer base and shelves above, W112cm x D58cm x H103cm, £2,510, Grange; **11 Skogaholm desk** with a two-drawer base and compartments above, W107cm x D51cm x H96cm, from £1,395, Nordic Style; **12 Bramley roll-top desk** with four drawers, pull-out shelf and compartments above, W91cm x D44cm x H115cm, £950, Laura Ashley ➔ **For stockist and contact details, turn to page 160**

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ABOVE French two-drawer desk, W120cm x D60cm x H76cm, £220, with four-drawer desk hutch, £120. It's available in ivory (shown here), white or stone painted finishes. Tilla chair, £245. All from The Dormy House