



Tips and Tricks  
for having a  
workspace that  
brings you JOY

A hand holding a lit sparkler against a dark, splattered background. The sparkler is bright and glowing, with many sparks flying out. The background is dark with white splatters and a circular pattern of dots.

# Hello!

**I am Louisa Higgins, your Arts Administrator at RCOE.**

**I have a degree in Interior Design from FIDM.**

**Among other things, I am a professional Interior Designer.**

# Lighting Designer + Showroom Manager

I was responsible for lighting design in Reno, Laughlin and Las Vegas casinos, and I ran a 10,000 sq. foot wholesale showroom.



# My classroom was all about feels...

Art, natural light, plants, pets, music, scents...  
Manipulating the AFFECTIVE environment.




# Why does any of this matter?

A poorly designed office can lead to higher stress levels, mental health issues, tension between co-workers, anxiety, and physical health issues.

Reworking your office layout can increase productivity and help you work more efficiently. Consider looking into these tips and tricks to optimize your office space and get more bang for your buck.

According to studies done on workplace and productivity, the most significant factor in determining an employee's ability to focus is their physical environment.

In fact, it's been said that a well-designed office can increase your productivity about 20%.



*“Keep only those things that speak to your heart. Then take the plunge and discard all the rest. By doing this, you can reset your life and embark on a new lifestyle.”*

*Marie Kondo*

# Declutter Often

Cramped and stuffed places are highly uninspiring and kill the will to work in any area. With so many things cluttered in an office or your working desk, you will find negativity and laziness pouring from their setup. It will make you avoid picking up any spot to work, and you will start to procrastinate on a large scale instead.

As a result, to increase productivity, make it a rule to declutter your office space frequently for promoting easiness and a feel-good setting to appreciate and enjoy working.





# Create an area for putting away gadgets

In this digital world of fast-spanning technical advancements, our gadgets are our close friends as well as our biggest enemies. Their constant need to draw our minds towards them can be highly distracting in the office. The best way to deal with their intrusion is to create a small but reliable gadget home or zone where you can put your devices before starting a task and set a self-imposed rule to stay away from it until you finish your work. Discipline and systematic rules are necessary for increasing productivity in a company.




# Improve Lighting

Ensuring your physical comfort means you need to consider the lighting. Inadequate lighting can cause strain on the eyes, resulting in headaches. Staring at a computer screen for hours already affects the eyes; the lighting in your office should not add to the problem.

You don't want your space to be too dark but also want to avoid blasting light. Don't overdo it with artificial lighting. Invite as much natural light into your office as possible. Sunlight helps boost brain chemicals that give you more energy, keep you calm, and improve your focus.

Add a few adjustable desk lamps and lighting fixtures.





*“The more you leave out, the  
more you highlight what you  
leave in.”  
— Henry Green “*

# Put up some art

It might be one nice piece of artwork that you love, a framed inspirational quote, or perhaps a cork board with a few photos, postcards or sayings that bring you joy. Artwork is a lovely way to make your space more personal and beautiful but still be professional.



# Display a few photos

You can certainly personalize your space with photos of the family or your dog. But keep them tasteful and limit it to 1-3 photos. Keep in mind that this is a workspace so the predominant focus should still be on work and productivity.





# Accessorize

Add items that are functional but also personalized to your own style and taste. You could:

- use a funky mug or a vintage jar to hold pens and pencils
- employ a beautiful bowl for paper clips
- use an antique box to hold business cards
- put your plant in a ceramic planter in your favourite colour
- bring in a lovely vase for fresh flowers
- use a textured woven basket as your in-box tray
- use a basket or bin as a phone charging station to help hide ugly cords



# Nature

We are biological creatures, first and foremost. So we are deeply affected by our access to (or lack of) the natural world. It's important for our psychological and physiological functioning, which directly affects our ability to be productive.

If you don't have windows in or near your workspace, bring in pictures of the outdoor world. Keep a picture of something natural as your screensaver and/or desktop wallpaper. Take walks outdoors at lunch or in between major tasks. Just a few minutes outside in the fresh air and sunshine can boost our mood and shake out the doldrums. Be sure to add a plant to your desk, too!



# Add a potted plant

When they say get close to nature, and include greenery at your desk, its not just for aesthetic effect. Potted plants near your office area or on your working desk help purify the air around you and create a surrounding that promotes inspiration and calmness.



# Scents

Try using these scents to stay focused:

- Pine – Increases alertness
- Cinnamon – Improves focus
- Lavender – Helps to relax you during a stressful work day
- Peppermint – Lifts your mood
- Citrus (any) – Wakes you up and lifts your spirits
- Most people will not appreciate added scents to their work environment so you'll need to keep it subtle. Keep essential oils in your bag or drawer and when you're in need of a boost put a few drops on a handkerchief or cotton ball.





# Sounds

The noise level in a work environment can vary greatly depending on the size of the team you work with, the office design and company culture. But make no mistake, the noise around you affects your ability to stay on task. Not only can it be distracting, it can also raise stress levels making your ability to sustain productivity far more difficult.

**If you work from a company office:** Bring in noise cancellation headphones and use music services like [Spotify](#) or [Songza](#) and choose concentration boosting sounds, like white noise. Find out if your office offers quiet workspaces for times when you need the utmost focus.



# Color

## **How you can apply color to improve or enhance your life**

Whether you buy into the idea of color therapy or the associated beliefs around the healing benefits of color, there are proven ways to use color to enhance and improve your life. The first step, however, is to do some research.

While specific colors have been proven to do things like enhance concentration and improve perceived relaxation, its important to take your own psychology, culture, and history into consideration. Different people respond to a variety of colors. For instance, in Western culture white is associated with purity and innocence, yet in many Eastern cultures it is associated with death and mourning.





# Worlds of Color

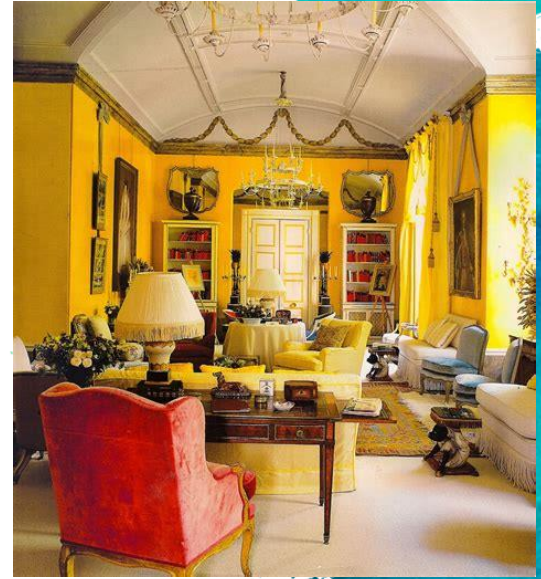
# Red/Orange

Red and orange are warm colors that, Augustin says, increases the sensation of heat and warmth. If you paint a dim, cool room with a color in the spectrum of red and orange, Augustin says, you'll perceive the room as warmer. Red walls or clothing draw our attention and can be a sign of warning. Red can also be associated with aggression, as well as stimulation and passion. Orange and red are also associated with hunger and food, though some studies have shown that people eat less when food is put on a red plate.



# Yellow

Considered to be the color of joy, yellow is also a warm color making it welcoming and engaging. If you live in an area that tends to be gloomy and cool, yellow can help make it seem warmer and more cheerful. Yellow has also been associated with mood-boosting and positive thinking.





# Green

Green is easy on the eyes, literally. We have three types of color receptors in our eyes, called cone cells. These cone cells see red, green, and blue easily, and green, since it falls in the middle of the spectrum of light we see, is easy for us to perceive (unless you are colorblind, of course). Green is associated with calming properties, which is why many schools, hospitals, and medical buildings are green inside.



# Blue

Blue is considered to be an energizing color, and in some shades can be calming. Blue is also associated with concentration and clarity of thought, according to studies.



# Violet

Purple or violet is a combination of the two extremes of the visible color we see: red, which is the hottest color, and blue, which is the coolest. Purple has similar soothing properties to blue and can be an imagination stimulator as well.



# Black



As mentioned above, in western culture, black is associated with death, mourning, and sorrow, but it can also be associated with power and rebirth. A black room can make things feel a bit melancholy or elicit feelings of intimacy, closeness, and drama.

# White

White is ubiquitous as a room color and often used to make space feel larger, cleaner, and more open. White rooms are often seen as blank canvases for a variety of pursuits.

For most of us, you want to use light colors on the walls because they make a space seem bigger than it is. Most of us live in spaces where we wish everything was just a little bit bigger, but if you are trying to create the smaller cozy effect, use a darker color. That creates the impression of the walls being closer.



# Environmental Psychology

Environmental psychology is the science of how what's in the world around you influences what goes on in your head. We think about things like how surface colors or colors of light influence how you think and behave, why what you feel underfoot matters,

how high the ceiling is, or the walls seem to be, how that all comes into play. Because life is always more complex, it's important to factor in issues like how people's personalities or national culture come into play, too."

# The spaces we occupy influence how we act and who we become

## Interior Design

The art of giving intentional thought to our living and working spaces. Creating a place that feels comfortable and inviting, thus allowing us to do and feel our best.

## Mental Health

Realizing that there are a variety of factors that impact how we feel and making the most of the ones that are in our control in our home and work environments.

## Self Care

Understanding that it isn't just the work product that matters...that we matter, and by paying attention to our environment we are manifesting self love and care.

# Thank you!

For investing your time, effort and creativity into the work you do for Riverside County Office of Education. You are appreciated!

