

Benching

These are the 5 most commonly asked questions about benching for commercial office environments, with straightforward answers to help you make a confident, well-informed purchase decision.

Top 5 Questions — Benching

1 How much space does each person need at a benching workstation?

The practical sweet spot for benching is 80–100 square feet per person. Ultra-dense configurations can reach 50–65 sq ft per station, which is architecturally achievable but consistently produces lower satisfaction scores and acoustic complaints. Standard open-plan benching typically allocates 100–125 sq ft per person, while a generous open-plan layout runs 125–150 sq ft. Always plan for at least 80 sq ft if employee comfort and productivity are priorities.

2 What surface width do I need for benching workstations?

Surface width depends on the user's role. Laptop-only or hoteling users can function at 42–48 inches wide, while standard knowledge workers need 48–54 inches. Dual-monitor setups require a minimum 60-inch-wide surface, and technical or analyst roles often need 66–72 inches. Surface depth should be 24 inches for laptop-only users, but 27–30 inches is the ergonomic standard for any workstation with a monitor — pairing 24-inch depth with a monitor arm is a common workaround on shallow benching runs.

3 How do I handle noise and privacy in a benching environment?

Acoustic management in open benching requires three simultaneous strategies: Absorb, Block, and Cover. Absorb using acoustic ceiling tile with an NRC rating of 0.70 or higher and carpet rather than hard flooring. Block using fabric-wrapped privacy screens 24–30 inches above the surface at every station — acrylic screens provide no acoustic benefit. Cover using a ceiling-plenum sound masking system to raise the ambient noise floor and reduce speech intelligibility across the space. Plan one enclosed focus room for every 8–10 benching stations as acoustic refuge.

4**What power and data should I specify for each benching station?**

The standard specification for most knowledge workers is 4 power outlets plus 2 data ports plus 1 USB-A/C combo per station. The minimum of 2 outlets and 2 data ports is routinely inadequate — users typically have 4–6 plugged devices including monitors, laptops, phone chargers, and desktop accessories. For intensive roles such as trading desks or dual-monitor builds, specify 6 outlets, 4 data ports, and 2 USB per station. Inventory actual device counts before finalizing power specifications to avoid fire code violations and power strip clutter.

5**What accessories are essential to specify alongside benching?**

Because benching provides no overhead storage, no built-in monitor arms, and no acoustic enclosure, all these functions must be supplied separately. Privacy screens (24-inch fabric-wrapped as standard) provide both visual separation and acoustic absorption. Monitor arms reclaim 6–10 inches of depth — critical on shallow surfaces. Mobile pedestals in BBF (box/box/file) configuration provide the personal storage that benching eliminates. Task lighting compensates for ambient lighting gaps, and keyboard trays reclaim 8–12 inches on shallow stations. Budget for accessories at specification time — they are not optional add-ons.

Have more questions? Our office furniture specialists are ready to help.

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