

Computer Desks

1 Minimum 24" Depth Is Non-Negotiable for Monitor Health

The single most common buyer regret with computer desks is ordering a desk that's too shallow. A 20" or 22" deep desk forces a 24" monitor within 16–18 inches of your face — well inside the recommended 20–26" viewing zone. The result is digital eye strain within weeks. If space is genuinely tight, use a monitor arm to push the screen back to the correct distance rather than accepting a shallow desk that will cause long-term discomfort.

2 Place Grommets Before You Need Them
If you're comparing two desks that are otherwise equal and one has cable grommets and the other doesn't, choose the one with grommets every time. Adding an aftermarket grommet to a laminate desk requires drilling through a finished surface — possible, but messy. Built-in grommets with clean factory-cut holes and fitted plastic liners are infinitely better. Look for at least one rear-center grommet and prefer desks with side grommets if you plan to use a monitor arm.

3 Set Your Keyboard Tray to Elbow Height, Not Desk Height

Standard desk height (29–30") is designed for writing with a pen, not typing on a keyboard. Typing at desk height forces most adults to raise their shoulders slightly and cock their wrists upward — both precursors to carpal tunnel syndrome and neck strain. Set the keyboard tray 1–2 inches below the desk surface, aligned with your natural seated elbow height (approximately 26–28" from the floor). Add a slight negative tilt (top of keyboard angled slightly away from you) for neutral wrist posture.

4 For Dual Monitors, Go 60" Wide Minimum
Two 24-inch monitors side-by-side span approximately 52 inches including bezels and stands. On a 55" desk, that leaves less than 3 inches of clearance on each side — and no room for speakers, a webcam, or any accessories at desk level. A 60" desk is the realistic minimum for dual monitors; 66" is more comfortable. If you're running two 27" monitors, start at 66" and consider 72". Don't let a \$50 desk-width difference determine your entire workstation experience for the next five years.

5 Mount Your Power Strip to the Underside of the Desk

Most computer setups generate 6–12 power connections: monitor(s), desktop tower, desk lamp, speakers, USB hub, phone charger. Running all those cords to a floor outlet creates a cable tangle that collects dust and becomes a trip hazard. Instead, mount a surge-protected power strip to the underside of the desk (most have keyhole slots for screw mounting). Route all cables from the grommet directly to the strip. The only cord that touches the floor is the single power strip cord to the wall outlet.

6 Monitor Arms Extend Your Desk's Functional Depth

If you want a 32" monitor on a 24"-deep desk, a clamp-mount or grommet-mount monitor arm is the solution. A monitor arm removes the stand from the equation entirely, allowing the screen to float at the precise height and distance you need regardless of desk depth. The monitor can be pulled close for reading and pushed back for reference work. For sitting-to-standing desks, monitor arms are especially valuable because they maintain the correct monitor-to-eye distance at both positions.

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7 Protect the Surface with a Full-Width Desk Mat

Computer desk surfaces take constant daily abrasion from mouse movement, keyboard use, arm contact, and the occasional drink. A full-surface desk mat (sometimes called a desk pad) made from leather, PU leather, or a textured fabric protects the laminate from micro-scratches and wear patterns, smooths the surface for precise mouse tracking, cushions forearms during long sessions, and can be replaced for a fraction of the cost of a new desk. Measure your desk before ordering — get one that extends at least the full width of your primary work zone.

9 Avoid Glass Tops If You Use Heavy Peripherals or Audio Gear

Glass computer desktops are visually striking, but they create real problems for working setups: mouse pads and wrist rests slide; keyboard noise resonates through the glass; monitor stand feet can leave permanent ring impressions in softer glass; and heavy speakers or subwoofers create low-frequency vibrations that travel through the glass surface. If you want the look of glass without the functional downsides, consider a glass-look laminate finish on an MDF core — same aesthetics, far more practical for daily use.

8 Measure Your Doorways Before Ordering a Large Desk

This sounds obvious, but it's a common delivery-day nightmare. Standard interior doorways are 32–36 inches wide; some older homes have 28-inch doors. A 72" L-shaped desk ships in boxes that may be 75–80 inches long and require maneuvering through hallways and around stair landings. Measure the shortest dimension of every turn between your delivery entrance and the desk's final location. Contact the retailer if you're uncertain — most commercial-grade desks disassemble into panel-by-panel components that can be taken apart for tight stairwells.

10 L-Shaped Desks: Put Your Monitor Arm on the Primary Side

One of the most productive configurations for an L-shaped computer desk is to put your primary monitor(s) on the main surface (wider side), use a monitor arm for precise positioning, and keep the return surface clear for a second laptop, notebook, documents, or secondary display. Resist the temptation to fill both surfaces with monitors — the return surface is most valuable as a non-digital work zone where you can spread out without switching context. Keep one surface clean and analog.