

# L-Shaped Desks

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

## Top 5 Questions — L-Shaped Desks

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### What size L-shaped desk do I need for my office?

Standard L-shaped desks have a main wing of 60–72 inches and a return wing of 36–48 inches, both at 24–30 inches deep. For most commercial workstations, a 60" × 30" main wing paired with a 48" × 24" return provides enough space for dual monitors, keyboard, and reference materials. The full desk footprint runs 5' × 5' to 6' × 7'. In a room, allow a total allocation of approximately 8' × 8' for a standard L-desk with adequate chair push-back clearance (24–36 inches minimum behind the chair) and a side passage aisle. Measure your room carefully before ordering — the footprint is significantly larger than a straight desk.

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### What is left-return vs. right-return and how do I know which I need?

Left-return means the secondary wing extends to the user's left when seated at the main surface; right-return means it extends to the right. The correct choice is determined by room layout — specifically where the walls, doors, and traffic paths are relative to the intended desk position, not by hand dominance. To determine the correct return: stand in the room facing where the desk will be placed, and identify which side the room corner or window wall falls on. The return should extend along that wall. Ordering the wrong return side is one of the most common and costly desk purchasing mistakes. Some models are reversible — if you have any doubt, check whether the model offers reversibility before ordering.

**3****How much surface area does an L-shaped desk provide compared to a straight desk?**

An L-shaped desk provides 40–60% more usable work surface than a comparable straight desk within a similar room footprint. The two-wing design creates distinct task zones: the main wing for the primary computer setup and the return for reference documents, a phone, a secondary monitor, or in-progress project materials. For dual-monitor users, the corner junction provides a natural location for both screens, with the return wing extending to one side. The return wing also makes efficient use of corner space that would otherwise be unused in any rectangular room. Better ergonomic reach is another advantage — more surface area is within arm's length of the seated user.

**4****What pedestal and storage options are available for L-shaped desks?**

L-shaped desks can be configured with pedestals under the main wing, the return, or both. A BBF (box/box/file) pedestal under the main wing is the most common configuration — two shallow supply drawers plus one deep file drawer. An FF (file/file) pedestal under the return provides maximum filing capacity for paper-intensive roles. Many configurations also support a hutch mounted above the main wing or return, adding 36–42 inches of overhead shelving. Mobile pedestals (rolling BBF or BF units) supplement built-in storage in any configuration. When planning total storage, count drawer capacity across all surfaces including any credenza placed behind the user.

**5****What materials are L-shaped desks made from and which is most durable?**

Most commercial L-shaped desks use high-pressure laminate (HPL) or thermally fused melamine (TFM) over a particleboard or MDF core. TFM is the commercial standard — the surface layer is bonded under heat and pressure, creating a harder, more durable finish that resists scratches, stains, and moisture for years of daily use. Look for laminate meeting NEMA LD-3 standards for commercial use. Edge banding quality is critical: specify 3mm PVC or ABS edge banding on all exposed edges — thinner 0.5mm banding peels and chips over time. Wood veneer L-desks are available for executive environments and provide genuine wood appearance, but require more maintenance and are vulnerable to moisture.

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

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