

interiors



Creating a tranquil workspace



Create an oasis of calm during a moment of crisis by Clair Strong Interior Design

Making your home a calming space has never been more important than now, during lockdown. Making a few simple interior design tweaks to your space can make all the difference to how it functions for you and your family in these challenging times.

Create a dedicated office space

As many of us are now working from home, it is so important to allocate a specific area of your home as an office space. Don't flop on the sofa with your laptop or sit at the messy kitchen table. You need a comfortable and organised space away from the hustle and bustle of home life to be productive.

You don't need much space. Create a mini office in a corner of your sitting room, on the landing, in the spare room or in a space under the stairs. Choose a slim desk, a comfortable chair and a few floating shelves for paperwork and it won't impact too much on your living space; it will really help you separate work and home life. Our main image (above) shows a desk from Habitat that matches the classic dining furniture to create a tranquil space to work.

Make your bedroom a sanctuary

Nothing makes us feel safer than being tucked up in bed. Make your bedroom somewhere calm to escape to. Pile your bed with soft coloured throws and cushions in neutral tones and contrasting textiles to get that boutique hotel feel.

Add a stylish bedside table and invest in a scented candle like my favourite classic Diptyque Baies. The throws, cushions and Penelope bedside tables in this bedroom (opposite) are all from West Elm and create a relaxing room.

Create a reading corner

Curling up and spending a few hours immersed in a good book is the perfect way to escape the stresses of life at the moment. Invest in a comfortable chair



Make the bedroom a place to relax



Curl up with a good book

in a bold colour like this teal chair from Sofa Workshop (see above) and create a reading corner by a window or under a reading lamp to escape with a good book. If you read in the evenings, choose good functional lighting. There are lots of modern standard lamps on the high street like this one from Habitat (see above), which is a real design classic.

Bring the outside in

Nature is food for the soul at the moment and we are all appreciating it more on our one daily walk. I just love the trend for real indoor plants – the bigger the better! Plants give personality to your home, add an extra layer to your scheme and are good for your mental health too. Fill a vase with daffodils, have pots of herbs in your kitchen or invest in some real or faux plants for your bathroom. In this pretty Bath apartment, we chose a fabulous large-scale palm print fabric called Palmetto from Nina Campbell for the Roman blind to complement the plants.

Invest in storage solutions

With the whole family at home, clutter can get on top of us and make us feel stressed. Cool storage that everyone likes to use is essential. Bright coloured lockers from Mustard Made are great for anything from bathroom toiletries to toys. The industrial style, reimagined in a range

of wonderful colours from pink and olive green, to dark grey and white, works brilliantly in both contemporary and traditional spaces.

Organise your shelves

Take the time to declutter your shelves. Throw out anything that isn't beautiful or useful and then turn your shelves into works of art. Creating a good #shelfie has a few simple rules.

Use a carefully coordinated pallet of colours, group items in odd numbers (three's work well), vary heights of groups and have a theme. If you have a big collection of books, organising them by colour can look really striking.

Make every meal special

There's been so much talk about store cupboard meals and stockpiling that we've forgotten the pleasure of a beautifully laid table. Turn every mealtime into something special by laying the table with napkins and pretty glassware. Use gorgeous platters and serveware or a vintage cake stand for all the baking you're doing! Make every meal a event. I love to serve pasta in big white bowls, my cheese on marble boards and egg and toast on my perfect White Company Egg & Soldiers Board.

Music for the soul

I am listening to the radio while I work and music in the evenings to relax to. I love my Sonos speakers with Amazon Alexa built in. You can fill the room with sound and they look super



Cool storage options



Bring the outside in

cool too. I have a few of the smallest ones dotted around the house so I'm always surrounded by music. They are a favourite with my clients too.



Soften the blow

Cushion yourself

Binge watching box sets? Me too. When you're snuggled up on the sofa watching your favourite film, there's nothing better than some really lovely cushions to sink into. Put your winter velvet and wool cushions away and invest in some new linen cushion covers in springtime colours. H&M Home sells wonderful value washed linen covers in a huge range of colours from blush pink to olive green at just £8.99 each (see image above).

If you're going to enjoy spending more time at home, simple things that bring joy are worth seeking out. As an interior designer, my job is to create beautiful and functional spaces that transform my client's design ideas into a home or workspace they love. That's never been more important than it is now.

Clair Strong Interior Design is a small, friendly, creative business based in Bath and London. We provide a wide range of services for residential and commercial properties – homes, offices, bars, shops and hotels – in the UK and abroad. Our portfolio covers small-scale projects, such as 'staging' a property for sale, to complete interior design solutions for homes and businesses and we can source a wide range of materials, fittings, furniture and accessories at competitive prices.

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