

Low Anxiety Desk Space

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Do you find yourself avoiding your desk because all you associate with it is anxiety and work? I've been there. That's why I comprised a list of ideas for how to redesign your desk space to minimize anxiety and maximize mindful productivity.

- **De-condition your brain to associate your desk with stress.**
 - Watch a fun movie, play a game, or read a favorite book at your desk and teach your brain that your desk is not the enemy!
**Did you know? This technique is called exposure therapy; which "is a form of behavioral therapy designed to help you face your fears". (i)*
- **Clear off anything from your desk that is not absolutely necessary.**
 - Don't worry, you can bring back your favorite decorations in a minute... we just want to make room for the most important things first.
- **Place a planner, blank paper, or to-do list on your desk with a list of clear and attainable goals to start your work. Think about the small steps you can take when starting an assignment. This may mean writing down things like "open textbook, write name on assignment, write down what the assignment is in my planner, attempt the first problem and then take a 5 min break, etc."**
 - This should be a short list of 3-5 things you can reasonably accomplish
- **Place a sensory box or other items that help relieve anxiety within arm's reach from your desk so you can reach for them if needed. (fidgets, stress balls, stuffed animals, a favorite blanket, etc.)**
 - This may mean placing a diffuser with a calming scent on your desk, photos of a calming color, etc.
- **Lastly, put genuinely motivating phrases above your desk. (aka if it doesn't resonate with you then don't put it!)**
 - For me the phrase "you haven't come this far to only come this far" brings great comfort and is something that I like to keep within immediate eyesight at my desk.
- **Now bring back any decorations and unnecessary items to your desk that amplify your feeling of the desk space. If adding something back in causes stress or a sense of overwhelm, then take a step back and ask yourself if you really need this in your desk space or if this can be placed somewhere else.**

Overall, I hope that you develop a new relationship with your desk space as one where it is safe to spend time, plan for tasks, and begin tasks that may seem intimidating to start.

References:

(i) Gupta, S. (2021, June 29). What is exposure therapy? Verywell Mind. Retrieved June 1, 2022, from <https://www.verywellmind.com/exposure-therapy-definition-techniques-and-efficacy-5190514>