

IF YOUR COLLEGE STUDENT COMES HOME...



By Maria Ebbets

maria.ebbets@newsday.com

If the pandemic forces your child to unexpectedly return from college, Long Island interior designers offer these seven tips for getting them (and you) settled in.

1 DECLUTTER

Decluttering is about more than improving the aesthetics of a workspace – studies have proven that it's essential to both physical and mental well-being, says Amal Kapen, owner of Amal Kapen Interiors & Decorations in Huntington. "Environments affect our mood and can easily distract us," says Kapen. She suggests starting out by decluttering the area where your child will be working and studying.

2 DESIGNATE A WORKSPACE

Distractions at home are inevitable, so establishing a physical space to enter and exit is paramount to success, says Melissa Sacco, owner of Melissa Sacco Interiors in North Bellmore. If space is limited, use a large room with natural light or a quiet attic or basement with windows, she says. Kate Singer, owner of Kate Singer Home in Huntington, recommends creating a new space. If that is impossible, redecorate the child's bedroom to mark a new beginning, letting them pick out paint and furnishings, she says. Turning a closet alcove into a private desk area by removing doors and contents is also an

option, says Singer. One simple hack: Kapen suggests creating more room by downsizing from a full or queen bed to an extra-long twin.

3 ORGANIZE YOUR SPACE

It's been proven that being well organized eases tasks and allows for more efficient work habits, says Singer, who is a fan of The Container Store as a resource to create an organized space for successful learning. Kapen suggests adding a bookcase or wall shelves to help keep students organized.

4 MAKE ROOM FOR STORAGE

"Storage is a necessary element to a productive workspace," says Kapen. She recommends a small filing cabinet on wheels with a drawer for storing important papers. A good alternative to buying additional furniture and inadvertently creating clutter is using multipurpose furniture to maximize your home office, especially if family members are sharing the space, says Sacco.

5 LIGHTING IS KEY

Lighting has been deemed the most

important aspect of any living space, says Sacco, who recommends making maximum use of natural light and windows in a room. Kapen suggests that desk, standing and wall lights be used in combination to effectively light a room. Lamp placement is key. For example, a lamp located next to where you will be reading, a table lamp on your desk, a wall light next to your bed and a standing lamp next to any lounge chairs are all helpful in reducing eye strain, adds Kapen.

6 PICK COMFORTABLE FURNITURE

"Investing in comfortable and durable outdoor lounge furniture is a good way to get in some vitamin D while studying," says Sacco. She also suggests selecting stylish and functional furniture that will save space while making a statement. Adding a comfortable chair is helpful – Amazon has reasonably priced options for under \$100," says Kapen.

7 CUSTOMIZE

"Literally and figuratively, letting our children have some freedom, space and privacy to do their own thing on their terms as much as possible might help



Tim Cree, Creepwalk Media Inc.

North Bellmore interior designer Melissa Sacco designed this space for a college student.

offset the reality that they are still at home when they would much rather be off starting their own lives," says Singer. She suggests wall decals and paint for customizing. Using paint colors to enhance the space are great options, Sacco says. "Select muted tones to help calm and brighter hues for inspiring creativity," she says.