



New Sunroom Creates a Birder's Paradise

Beth and Larry A. started out simply wanting to repair a broken, and aging patio. What they received was a beautiful new sunroom and patio that has expanded the usefulness of their home, bringing the outdoors in and allowing them to enjoy their yard in new ways.

The existing patio was what Larry called "wasted space" outside the kitchen door. The patio was there when our clients bought the 1980 home in 2004. Over the years, it had housed a hot tub and a gazebo, but really was rarely used. The couple made the decision to stay in this home and neighborhood that they enjoy, but to find a better way to use the space they had.

With that in mind, the couple reached out to Atlanta Design & Build. From the first visit, Dale Contant knew it didn't make sense to simply repair the existing patio. He suggested a GA Room with an enlarged patio extending into the yard to better enjoy the outdoors.

"Dale helped us see the possibilities of the space we had," Beth says. "He listened to us and was able to create the perfect space for us and our family."

The couple has coined the space the "Bird Room," choosing the name because while relaxing in their new space they enjoy watching birds—and have identified 35 species native to Georgia in their yard.

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DESIGNING A PRODUCTIVE HOME OFFICE

Maybe you were thrown into working at home because of the pandemic, or maybe you've been doing it for years. A lot of us are going to continue to work at home at least part-time as businesses figure out how to move forward. Whatever the reason, working at home can offer several benefits—less time wasted commuting, more flexibility, and more productivity.

But to get the most of working from home, you're going to want to create a workspace that allows you to be as productive as possible. Perhaps that means an addition to make room for your growing home business, or simply a redesign to make the most out of your existing space. We're ready to help you tackle whatever you need from a home office and find the best solution.

Here are six tips for creating your best home office.

1. Location, location, location

The best home office is one that will help you avoid distractions, but also provide a comfortable setting.

A separate room, away from the main traffic flow of the house, is best. Finding (or creating) a space that allows you to close a door will give you the necessary privacy for calls with clients or Zoom meetings. It may be tempting to squeeze yourself into a large closet, but think about the other rooms in your home, like a little-used guest room or dining room. An unfinished basement may offer some privacy, but why not finish the area to create a more comfortable workspace?

A dedicated office space helps you associate "work time" and separate it from your home life. If you're going to need to meet with clients in person, be sure the office has or is near an outside entrance to avoid having to take people through your home.

2. Embrace natural light

A key part of selecting the location of your new home office is natural light. Research shows that company offices with more natural light enjoy greater productivity. A large window will also give you something to look at besides your computer. (If a window isn't an option, at least consider a nice picture so you're not staring at a blank wall.)

3. Install sufficient lighting

Even with plenty of natural light, there's going to be cloudy days or late nights. Good ambient lighting will help reduce eye strain, headaches, and other problems. Position your desk and computer to avoid glare but offer sufficient lighting for tasks. Consider installing LED lighting. LED lights aren't as harsh as fluorescent bulbs, use less energy than other types of lighting, and have a very long life.

4. Efficient storage

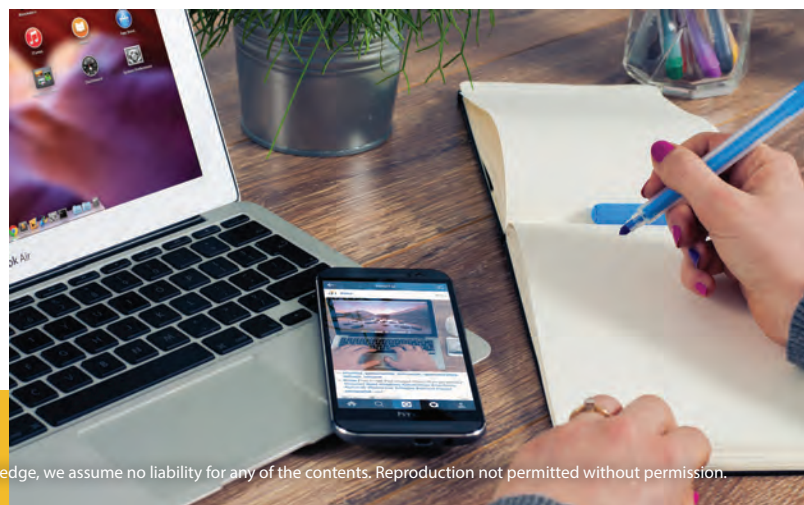
Get creative with your storage. Inset cubbies, racks, or floating shelves on the wall can help save valuable floor and desk space. Built-in cabinets will hide printers and other peripherals that otherwise will clutter up the space. Consider a closet you can outfit with shelves to minimize the space you use in the room.

5. Think ergonomics

Stop and think about how you use (or are going to use) your office. The layout needs to reflect that. If you're going to spend a lot of time getting up to grab your stapler or bending over to grab paper off the printer, that's not efficient or good for your body. Set up your desk or table so that your back and neck are straight and your arms are parallel to the desk. Adjust the chair height so your feet are flat on the floor (and while we're at it, invest in a good chair). Make sure the whole arrangement is set up so you don't have to lean over, slouch, or crane your neck to work.

6. Set rules

Not a design tip, per se, but one for your sanity. It's important to set expectations with yourself, your supervisor, and your family. Have set "office hours" that are your normal work time and try to stay away from your home office outside those hours. At the same time, make it clear to everyone that your work time is just that—work time. If at all possible, have them treat the situation just like they would if you were at the office.



Easy Entryway Upgrades

Oh, the poor neglected entryway. The drop spot for coats, backpacks, shoes, and more.

It doesn't have to be that way, though. You can make your entryway more attractive and more useful at the same time with these easy updates included in your home's remodel.



Creative Storage

You've got to have space for all that "stuff," but why not have some fun with it? A whimsical design that matches your personality gives a great first impression when visitors come in the home. Let kids pick their own themes. It might even make them more likely to use the storage spaces...well, maybe!

Adding cubbies offers a great space to put hats, gloves, or other accessories. Use color coded bins for each family member.

Seating

If people are going to be taking off shoes, coats, or outdoor gear, they need somewhere to sit. Nothing's worse than doing the awkward jumping-on-one-foot dance in the doorway. Use a bench seat with storage underneath it to maximize the space.

Overhead Lighting

What's the first thing you do when you walk in? Turn on the light. So the entryway area should have ample lighting, with



a switch within easy reach of the door. During daytime hours, let in plenty of natural light by remodeling the doorway to include sidelites or transom windows.

Drop Zone

A shelf or cubby right inside the door can make a handy place to drop that handful of keys, mail or other detritus. Ones with built-in hooks can offer even more wall-mounted storage space.

Be Colorful

Painting the walls of the entryway or foyer a different color than the rest of the space will help it feel more like a separate room even if it isn't set apart by walls.



Creative Backsplash Options for the Kitchen

A backsplash is a great opportunity for homeowners to express themselves in a kitchen remodel. While tile is the most common material for a kitchen backsplash, there are a wealth of options to cover that wall space between the counter and cabinets.

Here are a few ideas to add some creative flair to the kitchen.

Glass is easy to clean and resistant to mold, mildew, and bacteria. It is impermeable, so can be installed above a sink or anywhere else it may get wet. Glass is available in a variety of colors, offering an endless of design options. Naturally reflective and refractive, a glass backsplash will help the kitchen feel brighter and more open.

Wood can be painted to match the any kitchen color scheme, or it can be left with a natural finish. Reclaimed wood offers an attractive rustic look, perfect for a farmhouse kitchen. Sealing with a polyurethane finish will help protect the wood, but it is still more susceptible to staining and water damage than other materials.

There are a number of metal options for backsplashes, from copper to tin to stainless steel. Metal is easy to clean and can be found in different textures and patterns to match any style. Many metal backsplash tiles are eco-friendly, crafted from recycled materials.

Natural stone options like marble or granite are a great complement to a high-end countertop. Due to the nature of stone, no backsplash is the same as another, guaranteeing a unique look. Like a stone countertop, a backsplash is susceptible to staining and is more difficult to clean than glass or tile.

Brick veneer offers an attractive, nostalgic look. Brick is durable, but also requires sealing and is highly absorbent. Because of its uneven surface, it can be difficult to clean.

If you haven't looked at wallpaper lately, you may be surprised. Today's wallpaper options are creative and durable, while offering an incredible variety of patterns. Wallpaper is easy to clean, and simple to replace when you decide you want a different look.

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Creative Kitchen Backsplashes



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The new all-season, 18 ft. by 18 ft. Bird Room is tied into three walls of adjacent rooms. To forego any concern of the addition reducing the light into these rooms, the design includes a 17-foot tall vaulted ceiling, which, from the outside, matches the other roof lines of the home. To feed the space with light, we installed custom gable glass and full-view Pella sliding and French doors that open directly to the new stone patio. Beth and Heather, our designer, selected complementary colors for flooring, ceiling, and paint, which all reflect the light and give the space a harmonious feel.

To make sure the sunroom addition wouldn't darken the adjacent den, a 10-foot section of den wall was removed to place a custom retractable pocket door which permeates the space with light but can also close off the den for television viewing. The couple's stained glass displays beautifully from the side panels of this door.

For complete comfort, the Bird Room includes a kitchenette with beverage fridge on the wall adjoining the kitchen. We created a pass-thru window from the kitchen to the kitchenette as well. We also installed a mini-split heating/cooling unit in the sunroom with its own temperature controls to assist the HVAC.

On cooler days and nights, they can choose to enjoy sitting outside with shade offered by a pergola over the patio. The patio itself leads into and blends seamlessly with the landscaped yard and gardens.

With restrictions due to the coronavirus, the couple has been using the space even more than they expected. This comfortable sanctuary from the outside world is now their favorite spot in the house.

"It just moved us out and into a light, airy room," Larry says. "So now, instead of peering through a little window in our kitchen to look out into the back yard, we are in the back yard."

The remodel was such a pleasant process they have already asked us to work on their next remodeling project, a redo of their master bath.

"I'll never forget the comment that Dale made when we decided to go forward with the project," Larry says. "He said, 'This will change the way you live in your house.' That sounded appealing to me and my wife... And it turned out be true."

