



THE HEALTHY OFFICE Makeover

Feel alert and ready to work from manic Monday to casual Friday. BY Alice Oglethorpe

DID YOU GET THE MEMO? Working in an office may take a toll on your health. But you can cultivate a healing environment with these feel-good fixes.

VISUAL STIMULI. Researchers in South Korea found that exposure to art helps people think more creatively. You don't need four white walls to turn your space into a gallery; simply prop up some prints. Or display a gazeworthy calendar, like Rifle Paper Co.'s Midnight Menagerie desk calendar (\$16; riflepaperco.com), which depicts flora and fauna in a wooded wonderland.

THE SOUND OF SOLITUDE. Office din not only distracts but may also sap motivation, according to a small study from Cornell University. Block out the commotion and lose yourself in your "focus music" (or silence) with Bose QuietComfort 20 Acoustic Noise Cancelling headphones (\$250; bose.com). They sit discreetly inside your ears so cubicle mates won't notice you're ignoring them. If someone needs your attention, you just press a button to tune in.

BREATHS OF FRESH AIR. Many office buildings have poor ventilation that traps chemical pollutants from carpeting and furniture, as well as allergens. Breathe a little easier with the Levoit LV-H132 air purifier (\$110; levoit.com), a compact plug-in device that has a HEPA filter to catch dust, mold, and unhealthy volatile organic compounds, plus an activated carbon filter to keep the air in your office smelling fresh.

A TREAT FOR FEET. Using a standing desk might be a good way to get out of your chair, but you're not guaranteed to actually move around more. And time on your feet can lead to body aches: Australian researchers found that two hours of standing at a desk resulted in swelling in the legs and all-over discomfort. The cushioned Ergodrive Topo (\$99; ergodrive.com) standing mat has raised edges and varied surfaces that encourage shifting your weight throughout the day.

ORDER, ORDER! A cluttered desk sometimes indicates an overwhelmed mind—and may prompt less-savvy food choices, too. That's according to researchers from the University of Minnesota, who found that people choose a more nutritious snack after performing a task in a tidy setting than in a disorderly one. Stay organized—and away from the vending machine—with a desktop file sorter that keeps everything in its place (Pink Sunburst files, \$5 for six, and Russell + Hazel acrylic file sorter, \$24; containerstore.com).

The Gift of LIGHT

This winter brighten your life—and mood.

AT LEAST 1 percent of American adults suffer from seasonal affective disorder (SAD), a type of depression that comes and goes at the same time every year (if you're one of them, a therapist can help). Many others simply have the winter blues, triggered by scant sunlight, says Kelly J. Rohan, PhD, psychological science professor at the University of Vermont. The lack of light seems to shift our circadian rhythms and throw off production of melatonin, a hormone that helps us sleep. "Essentially, people with SAD—and possibly the winter blues—are stuck in a biological night state," Rohan says. She recommends getting outside for a half hour every morning. It can't hurt to also bring some sunshine indoors with these:



Dawn-simulating alarm clocks. The Philips Somneo Sleep and Wake-up Light (\$200; philips.com)

starts glowing 30 minutes before you need to be up, so you'll feel alert by the time your room is illuminated.



Circadian rhythm lamps. "To sync your body with the time of day, you need to be exposed to brighter

bluish light in the morning and dimmer yellow light in the evening," says Mariana Figueiro, PhD, lighting researcher at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Set GE's Sol (\$150; amazon.com) to emit the right color for the hour. —A.O.

