

Desk Space Planning

1

Draw It Before You Buy It

A 15-minute sketch on graph paper prevents a \$500 return. Cut out scale representations of each desk and move them around. Confirm chair clearances before committing.

2

Mark the Chair Zones, Not Just the Desk

The desk footprint is only part of the occupied space. A 60"x30" desk with a 48" chair clearance actually occupies 60"x78" of usable floor area. Plan for the full working envelope.

3

Orient Desks Parallel to Windows

Side-lit desks minimize screen glare and shadow issues. Window-facing or window-backed positions both create problems. If parallel isn't possible, invest in monitor hoods or adjustable window treatments.

4

Plan Your Power Before Positioning

Identify all electrical outlets and data connections first. Position desks so power access is natural. Moving outlets after the fact is expensive — moving desks is not.

5

Maintain 44" Primary Aisles in Shared Spaces

The 36" ADA standard is a minimum, not a comfort target. 44" feels noticeably better for daily traffic, and it's future-proof for ADA compliance if your space classification changes.

6

Account for Chair Swing, Not Just Chair Depth

Chairs swivel. A chair pulled from a desk sweeps a 360-degree arc. The clearance behind the desk needs to accommodate both the rollout path and the chair's turning radius — especially relevant in tight offices.

7

Benching Systems Need Shared Aisle Space

In open-plan bench layouts, add a shared aisle of 48"–60" between facing rows of workstations. Two 30" chair clearances back to back require 60" minimum between desk edges — more is better.

8

Plan for Delivery Before Furniture Arrives

Confirm the building's elevator dimensions, stairwell clearances, and loading dock availability. Large desk components (panel-end desks, credenzas) can be 60"+ in a single piece. Know the delivery path in advance.

9

Use Temp Layout Before Final Commitment

If you're outfitting a new office, use cardboard boxes or tape outlines on the floor to mock up desk positions before furniture arrives. Walk through the layout, sit in the positions, confirm the traffic flow feels natural.

10

Leave Room for Growth

Plan slightly looser than you need to today. Office teams grow, and furniture layouts get crowded fast. A layout that's exactly right for 10 people will feel overcrowded with 12. Build in a 10–15% density buffer if possible.