

MINIMALIST DESK SETUP GUIDE

The Complete Blueprint for a Clean,
Distraction-Free, High-Performance Workspace

5

Sections

1

Blueprint

30

Min Setup

Clarity. Speed. No Guessing.

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How to Use This Guide

Work through each section in order on your first read. Then use the Blueprint (Section 02) and Checklist (Section 06) as your hands-on reference while setting up. The Product Stack (Section 04) is modular — buy what you need, skip what you don't.

The Minimalist Desk Philosophy

Minimalism at a desk isn't about having less. It's about having only what earns its place. Every item on your desk should either be used daily or invisible. Everything else is visual noise that splits your attention and slows you down.

Research consistently shows that cluttered environments increase cognitive load — your brain has to actively suppress irrelevant visual information while you work. A clean, intentional desk reduces that overhead and lets you think faster.

The Three Rules

Rule 1: Surface First

Your desk surface is prime real estate. Only keyboard, mouse, and monitor live on it permanently. Everything else gets a home — a drawer, a shelf, a cable tray, a dock — or it doesn't stay.

Rule 2: Cable Invisibility

Visible cables are the fastest way to make a clean desk look messy. Every cable gets managed, hidden, or eliminated. No exceptions.

Rule 3: One-Item-In, One-Item-Out

Every time you add something to your desk, something else must leave or find a permanent off-surface home. This keeps the setup from slowly accumulating clutter over time.

62%

less decision fatigue with a clear desk

2x

faster task-switching in organised spaces

23

min average time saved locating items

Exact Desk Layout Blueprint

The blueprint below is the proven minimalist layout used across thousands of clean desk setups. It works for desks from 47" to 72" wide. Every zone has a specific purpose — nothing is arbitrary.

The 3-Zone System

ZONE	ITEMS	POSITION	RULE
Zone 1 Primary	Keyboard, Mouse, Notepad	Centre, within elbow reach	Must be reachable without moving shoulders
Zone 2 Secondary	Phone, Lamp, Small plant	Left or right edge	Used daily but not constantly
Zone 3 Storage	Everything else	Off-surface (drawer/shelf)	If it's not used daily, it's off the desk

Monitor Placement

Height Top of screen at or slightly below eye level

Distance Arm's length — 20 to 26 inches from your face

Tilt 10 to 20 degrees back toward you

Position Centred directly in front of your keyboard

Single vs Dual Single monitor preferred for minimalist setup; if dual, centre primary, angle secondary 15-20 degrees inward

Keyboard & Mouse Placement

Keyboard centred with monitor. Mouse immediately to the right (or left if left-handed) with no gap. Both on the same surface at the same height. Mouse within Zone 1 — reachable with elbow at your side. If using a full-size keyboard, consider switching to tenkeyless to bring the mouse 3–4 inches closer to your body.

Desk Dimensions That Work

Desk Width	Best For	Monitor Setup
47" – 55"	Compact / minimalist	Single monitor only
55" – 63"	Standard home office	Single or dual monitors
63" – 72"	Full workstation	Dual monitors + accessories

Desk Layout Blueprint

The diagram below shows the exact top-down layout. Zone 1 (blue) is the only area where keyboard, mouse, and monitor arm base live. Zone 2 (amber) holds secondary items. Zone 3 is off-surface entirely.

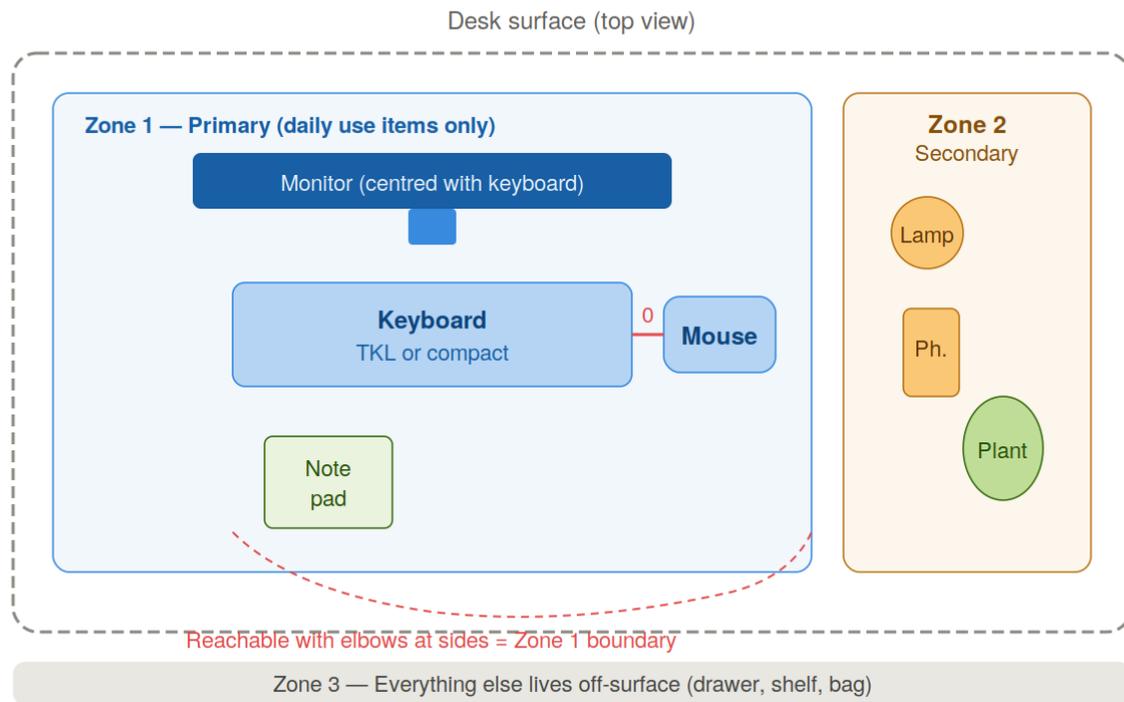


Fig. 1 — Top-down desk layout: Zone 1 (primary), Zone 2 (secondary), Zone 3 (off-surface)

Monitor Height Reference

The diagram below shows correct monitor positioning from the side. The red dashed line is your eye level — the top of the screen should sit on or just below it.

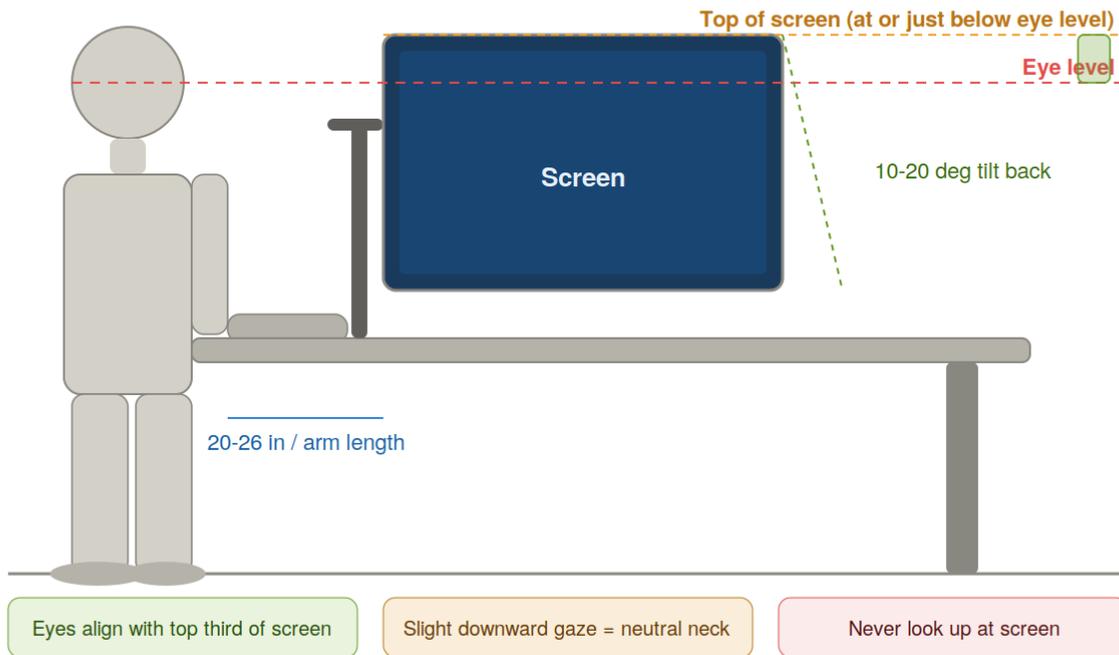


Fig. 2 — Side-view monitor height: eye level alignment and arm-length distance

Cable Management System

Cables are the number one reason clean desks stop being clean. This 5-step system eliminates visible cables completely and takes about 45 minutes to implement.

Step 1: Audit & Eliminate

Unplug everything. Before managing cables, eliminate them. Switch to wireless keyboard and mouse. Use a USB-C hub or docking station to reduce the number of cables running to your computer from multiple devices down to one or two.

Step 2: Route Under the Desk

All remaining cables run under the desk surface, not across it. Use a cable management tray (mounted under the desk) to bundle cables together and keep them off the floor. Route from your devices down the back desk leg using cable clips.

Step 3: Bind & Label

Use velcro cable ties (not zip ties — they're permanent and damage cables) to bundle cables that run together. Group by destination: monitor cables together, power cables together. Label each bundle at both ends so you never have to trace a cable again.

Step 4: Power Strip Placement

Mount your power strip under the desk using the included brackets or double-sided velcro. It should be invisible from any normal viewing angle. Run one extension cord from the wall to the mounted power strip — that's the only visible cable.

Step 5: The 'One Cable' Rule

Your goal: one cable visible on the desk surface at most — the one running from your docking station or hub to your laptop. Everything else lives under the desk or is wireless. If you have a desktop PC, run its single power cable down the back of the desk leg using clips.

Pro Tip: The Desk Grommet

If your desk has a grommet hole, run all cables through it rather than over the edge. If it doesn't, a clamp-on cable spine on the back edge keeps cables from draping visibly.

Product Stack — What to Buy

This is the complete minimalist desk product stack, organised by priority. You don't need everything — start with Priority 1 items and add from there. Each item is chosen for clean aesthetics, proven ergonomics, and longevity.

PRIORITY 1 — FOUNDATION			
Item	What to Look For	Budget	Recommended Options
Desk	Height-adjustable sit-stand (47"–63" width)	\$300–\$600	FlexiSpot E7 / Uplift V2 / IKEA BEKANT
Monitor	27" IPS, 1440p, thin bezel, VESA compatible	\$200–\$400	LG 27QN600 / Dell S2722QC / BenQ GW2780
Monitor Arm	Single arm, full articulation, cable management channel	\$35–\$120	Amazon Basics / Ergotron LX
Chair	Ergonomic mesh, adjustable lumbar, armrests	\$250–\$600	Autonomous ErgoChair Pro / HAG Capisco

PRIORITY 2 — INPUT & PERIPHERALS			
Item	What to Look For	Budget	Recommended Options
Keyboard	Compact TKL or 75%, wireless, low profile	\$80–\$200	Logitech MX Keys Mini / Keychron K3
Mouse	Wireless, right-sized for your hand, ergonomic	\$40–\$120	Logitech MX Master 3 / Anywhere 3
Mouse Pad	Desk mat style (80x40cm), single neutral color	\$20–\$50	Orbitkey / Grovemade / Logitech Desk Mat
USB-C Hub / Dock	All ports in one, single cable to laptop	\$40–\$150	Anker 13-in-1 / CalDigit TS3+

PRIORITY 3 — ENVIRONMENT & FINISHING

Item	What to Look For	Budget	Recommended Options
Desk Lamp	Adjustable arm, USB-C charging, warm+cool modes	\$40–\$120	BenQ ScreenBar / Elgato Key Light Mini
Cable Tray	Under-desk mount, steel mesh	\$15–\$30	JOTO Cable Management Tray
Velcro Ties	Reusable, for cable bundling	\$8–\$15	Amazon Basics / VELCRO Brand
Small Plant	Low-maintenance, 4–6" pot max	\$10–\$25	Pothos / Snake plant / Cactus
Minimal Tray /Organiser	One small tray for EDC items only	\$15–\$50	Grovmade / Oakywood / TechOrbits

Before & After Transformation System

Most desk transformations fail because people try to fix everything at once. This system breaks it into four phases. Each phase takes 30–90 minutes and delivers visible results. Complete one phase before starting the next.

BEFORE — The Problem Setup



Cluttered surface, cables everywhere



Hunched posture, monitor too low



Cable chaos, wrists under strain

AFTER — The Minimalist Setup



Clean surface, only daily-use items



Upright posture, monitor at eye level



Zero cable clutter, one leather tray

What changed between these two setups?

Surface cleared and zoned. Cables hidden under desk. Monitor raised to eye level on an arm. Keyboard and mouse brought close together. Wireless peripherals eliminating most cables. One tray for EDC items. The result: faster thinking, less physical strain, and a space that stays clean.

Phase 1: The Purge

30 min

Remove everything from your desk surface. Place it all on the floor. Now ask: does this earn daily desk space? If the honest answer is no, find it a permanent off-desk home — drawer, shelf, box, bin. Only put back what you use every single day.

- Remove everything from desk surface
- Sort: daily use vs. occasional use vs. never use
- Find permanent storage for non-daily items
- Return only daily-use items to desk

Phase 2: The Cable Audit

45 min

Unplug everything. Count your cables. Your target: 3 or fewer visible cables on the desk surface. Switch anything possible to wireless. Install under-desk cable tray. Bundle remaining cables with velcro ties. Mount power strip under desk.

- Unplug and count all cables
- Switch keyboard/mouse to wireless if not already
- Install under-desk cable tray
- Bundle cables with velcro ties — group by destination
- Mount power strip under desk

Phase 3: The Layout

30 min

Position your monitor arm and set monitor to eye level. Centre keyboard with monitor. Place mouse immediately next to keyboard. Lamp to one side, within reach. One small tray for EDC items (keys, phone, AirPods) — nothing else on the surface.

- Mount/adjust monitor arm to eye level
- Centre keyboard directly under monitor
- Place mouse immediately next to keyboard — no gap
- Position lamp at desk edge (left or right)
- Add one small tray for EDC items only

A minimalist desk only stays minimalist with a 2-minute daily reset. Every day before you close your laptop: clear the surface, return items to their zones, coil any stray cables. Once a week: wipe down the surface and check that nothing has been added that shouldn't be there.

- Daily 2-min reset: clear surface, return items to zones
- Weekly wipe-down
- Weekly audit: has anything crept back onto the surface?
- One-item-in / one-item-out rule — enforce it

Printable Setup Checklist

Print this page and work through it as you set up your desk. Tick each item once complete. A fully ticked checklist = a properly configured minimalist workspace.

SURFACE

- Only daily-use items on desk surface
- No stacked papers, folders, or boxes on the desk
- One tray for EDC items (keys, phone, small items) only
- Monitor centred, on arm or riser at eye level
- Keyboard centred directly below monitor
- Mouse immediately next to keyboard — no gap
- Lamp at left or right edge of Zone 2

CABLES

- Keyboard and mouse are wireless
- Power strip mounted under desk — invisible from seating position
- Under-desk cable tray installed and all cables routed through it
- All cables bundled with velcro ties — grouped by destination
- 3 or fewer cables visible on desk surface
- No cables running across the floor in traffic areas

ERGONOMICS

- Monitor top at or slightly below eye level
- Screen 20–26 inches from face
- Forearms parallel to floor while typing — elbows at ~90 degrees
- Feet flat on floor or on footrest
- Chair lumbar support hitting lower back curve
- Mouse reachable with elbow at side — not arm extended

ENVIRONMENT

- Desk surface is clean and easy to wipe down
- Lighting is adequate — no screen glare from windows
- One small plant or minimal decoration (optional)
- Daily 2-minute reset routine established
- Weekly audit system in place

More Desk Setup Resources

This guide is part of the evrhub.com desk setup library. Visit the links below for more:

evrhub.com/minimalist-desk-setup-ideas/

evrhub.com/ergonomic-desk-setup/

evrhub.com/clean-desk-setup-ideas/

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