

HOMEOWNER AND INTERIOR DESIGNER ELIN WALTERS TRANSFORMED A BEDROOM CLOSET INTO AN OFFICE SPACE FOR HER INTERIOR DESIGN FIRM. EVERYTHING FITS NEATLY BEHIND THE CLOSED DOORS, EVEN THE DESK CHAIR.



LOOKING FOR MID-MOD OFFICE SUPPLIES? CHECK OUT OUR FAVORITES ON ATOMIC-RANCH.COM.

Working Smarter

By Devin Smith
Photography by CJ South
Styling by Elin Walters

This 1958 tri-level home didn't have space for a full office, so homeowner and designer Elin Walters needed to get creative. She required a workspace where she could unroll architectural drawings, use her computer and store documents from her interior design clients. The solution came in the form of a clothes closet.

"As a designer, I'm constantly helping clients reimagine spaces," says Elin, owner and principal designer with Exactly Designs in Ann Arbor, Michigan. "Critically thinking about the best way to use space, rather than 'how it's always been done,' is a valuable approach to designing and living in a house. In this situation, the space was not being utilized to its capacity. This closet housed some clothing, but we quickly realized that there were other places to store clothing, but no other places to have a desk."

It took two weeks to transform the 6-foot-wide by 2.5-foot-deep by 8-foot-high closet into a functional and stylish office space. The hanging rod was removed, walls were painted, a custom floating birch desk was installed and shelves were hung. Elin's stepfather handcrafted the desk, which ties in with other wood accents throughout the home.

COMPACT YET COHESIVE

"It is important to me that materials are repeated in our house," Elin says. "You will find birch plywood is a theme found in each level of our tri-level house. Birch was used for our kitchen cabinet doors, as a way to wrap the ugly heat ducts and built-in cabinets in our lower level, and also in the construction of our media stand in our living room. Building the desk in birch was a way to bring that material to the upper level."

TOP: THE FLOATING DESK IS LONG ENOUGH FOR ELIN TO UNROLL ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS AND SET UP HER COMPUTER. EVEN THE OFFICE SUPPLIES ARE STYLISH.

ABOVE: THE CLOSET WAS DESIGNED TO FIT IN WITH THE MID-CENTURY STYLING OF THE 1958 HOME. ELIN SELECTED BIRCH FOR THE CUSTOM-BUILT DESK TO TIE IN WITH THE BIRCH USED ON THE CABINETS IN THE REST OF THE HOME.





In the reconstruction of the closet, Elin chose to keep the doors so the workspace could be closed off when not in use. **Careful measurements and design were key to making that possible.**

Storage Solutions

- **Think Differently.** If space is an issue, reimagine how you're currently using storage spaces, and don't overlook traditional spaces like hallways and niches.
- **Measure Twice.** By carefully sizing the desk, filing cabinet and chair, homeowner Elin Walters was able to conceal her office space behind closed doors when not using it.
- **Find Multi-Purposes.** Maximize your small space by getting the most out of the pieces you have. The desk chair in this office is also an extra dining chair.
- **Do It with Style.** Storage doesn't need to be dull to be functional. These floating shelves, used to house resource books, were hung in a random fashion for visual interest.

ABOVE: A HOME DOESN'T NEED A SPARE ROOM TO HAVE SPACE FOR AN OFFICE, AS HOMEOWNER AND INTERIOR DESIGNER ELIN WALTERS PROVED BY REPURPOSING A CLOTHES CLOSET IN HER HOME INTO A WORKSPACE.

In the reconstruction of the closet, Elin chose to keep the doors so the workspace could be closed off when not in use. Careful measurements and design were key to making that possible.

"The design of the space is about precision," she says. "Maximizing the depth of the custom-made counter, while having enough room to tuck in the chair and still be able to close the doors was the challenge. I'm happy to say it just fits."

The space fit for Elin's design work when she first added it to the home, and now fits her son's schoolwork too. "Recently, I have outgrown the desk and am in the finishing stages of a whole-room studio, but my son has adopted this closet desk and is thrilled that he inherited it," she says. 🌀