

HOW TO SURVIVE IN A TINY WORKSPACE

CUBICLE

1 Select a good location.

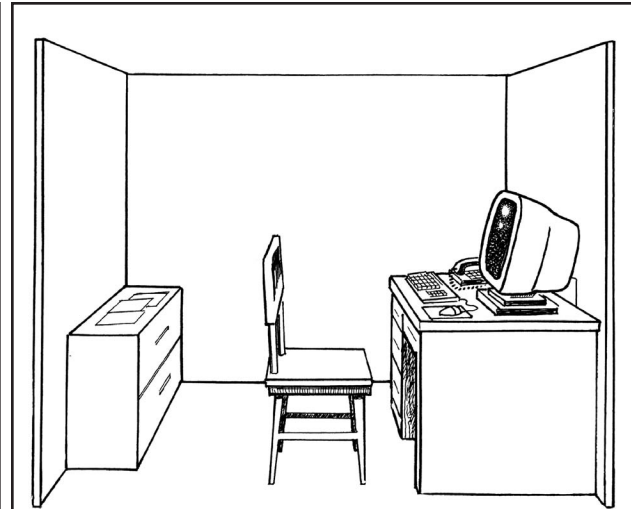
Opt for a cube away from main hallways, bathrooms, supply rooms, and other high-traffic areas, if you have the choice. Avoid cubes within the boss's line of sight.

2 Use comfort devices.

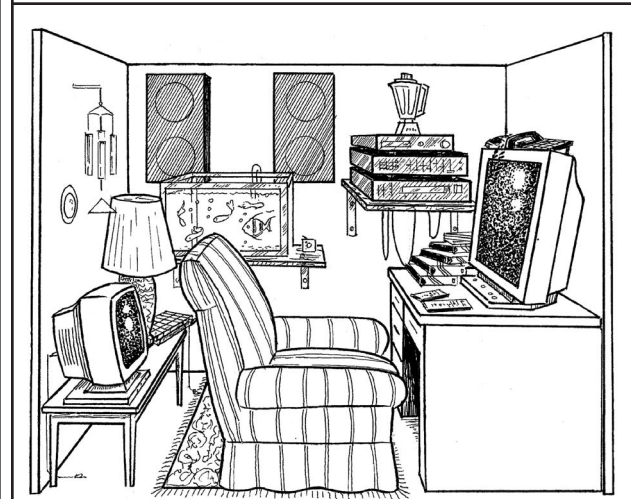
Requisition a more comfortable chair, or select one from an empty cubicle or office (some styles of chairs may be assigned to employees above a certain level, so be careful about what you borrow). Alternatively, obtain a doctor's note stating that you require a comfortable chair for medical reasons—your employer will be obligated to provide you with one. A back pillow and footrest will also make cube life more comfortable and relaxed. Do not attempt to fit in recliners, love seats, or hammocks.

3 Install convenience items.

A wireless telephone headset will give you increased freedom of movement. Noise-canceling stereo headphones (with an extra-long cord) will eliminate outside distractions. A small fan is effective in filtering out annoying noises such as typing and phone conversations. (The fan will also make it more difficult for co-workers to eavesdrop on your conver-



too little



too much

sations.) Small refrigerators, hair dryers, televisions, VCRs, and blenders should not be easily visible.

4 Personalize your space.

Decorate your cubicle with your family photographs and drawings, as well as other pictures and cartoons you like, giving your cube a homey touch. Avoid hanging too many items or you risk a cubicle that looks like a dorm room or refrigerator door.

5 Build upward.

There is usually no limit to the amount of vertical space you can occupy. Stack in/out trays high atop elevated surfaces for additional room. Staplers, tape dispensers, card files, and other items that traditionally occupy valuable space on top of a desk can be suspended from the ceiling to create a more spacious environment below.

6 Use mirrors.

Hang a large mirror on the cubicle wall to create the illusion of spaciousness.

Be Aware

- Health and safety codes dictate that cubes may not have roofs. Do not attempt to construct a fully-enclosed cubicle for privacy.
- Adding a small, stick-on, wide-angle mirror to the edge of your monitor allows you to see if someone is peering into your cubicle from behind.

- Notify your supervisor that you would like to sit in a “double-wide” cubicle if one becomes available. Standard cubes are 8 by 8 feet and 4 to 6 feet high—double-wides offer twice the floor space of standard units, plus an L- or U-shaped desk. The double-wide cubicle does carry some risk: If office space gets tight, you may find yourself with a cube-mate, a particularly undesirable situation.

HOW TO SURVIVE LIGHT DEPRIVATION DISORDER (LDD)

Working indoors during all of the daylight hours throws off your biological clock. If you work in a building without windows, or if you have a cubicle in the middle of the floor, you are susceptible to LDD.



Increase your exposure to sunlight.

Eat outside at lunchtime. Take your coffee breaks outside. Arrange for meetings outside of the office. Go on regular “market research” field trips. Work in conference rooms with windows.



Use artificial light.

Fill your cubicle with additional desk lamps and warm lights (not fluorescents). Install lightboxes that are designed specifically for treating LDD.



Place any lights in front of you.

Arrange lamps or lightboxes so that the light hits the back of your eye. Your goal is to increase the number of photons hitting your retina.

Be Aware

- Symptoms of LDD include insomnia or regular napping, carbohydrate cravings, depression, frustration at normal workday tasks, family problems, loss of libido, emotional disconnect, lethargy, joint pains, stomach problems, lowered resistance to infection, behavioral problems, attitude problems, and alcohol abuse. The disorder is often difficult to detect.
- Even if your workplace has a lot of windows, you are at risk. A corner office with a window is still highly unlikely to get the 2,500 Lux (the level of light the sun emits during daytime hours) your body needs. A well-lit office usually proffers only a few hundred Lux.
- If you work the night shift, avoid light during the day when you are trying to sleep. Blackout curtains and dawn simulation alarm clocks can help you achieve proper conditions.

TRUCK CAB

- 1 Use a quality seat.**
Choose a model (either when ordering the truck or after-market) with heat, massage, and multiple adjustment options. If these are not available, use a portable massager to maintain circulation and a heating blanket for comfort.
- 2 Install a sunroof.**
Natural light from above will make the cab seem more open.

- 3 Listen to satellite radio and books on CD.**
Satellite radio technology offers hundreds of stations, mostly commercial free, that will remain tuned in as you drive. Books will keep you alert and reduce fatigue.
- 4 Use a hands-free cellular phone with a speaker.**
Choose a service with good national coverage and avoid using an ear piece, which can be uncomfortable on long trips.
- 5 Use a CB or ham radio.**
Radios will keep you in contact with other drivers, alert you to traffic tie-ups or accidents, inform you of the location of police, or offer an outlet for conversation.
- 6 Install a power inverter with two 110-volt receptacles.**
These outlets will allow you to easily add items like portable computers, personal digital assistants, and coffee pots. Electronics may also be used for locating freight, sending e-mail, and getting directions.
- 7 Keep photos nearby.**
Pictures will give the cab a more personal feel. If you have children, consider putting some of their drawings on the dashboard.
- 8 Bring a pet.**
Dogs tend to be more amenable to long hauls than cats or fish.

Be Aware

For overnight hauls you can purchase a sleeper cab, which can be personalized to include all the necessities of home, including a toilet, a kitchenette, a television, VCR, DVD player, and cabinets for plenty of storage.

TOLLBOOTH

1 Adjust the seat.

The assigned seat may be hard and uncomfortable. Bring a cushion or a small, folding stadium chair with back support to place on the seat. A massager or vibrating seat pad will also combat discomfort.

2 Adjust interior elements.

Place the chair in an acceptable spot. If the booth has an adjustable table lamp, move it so the light is not in your eyes. Most tollbooths have a computer monitor or an adjustable touch screen on a swivel arm. Position the screen so you can view it comfortably.

3 Install comfort items.

Space heaters provide warmth during cold winter months; fans cool during the hot summer months. A small radio or television will keep your brain active, reducing fatigue. Most highway authorities do not allow “boom boxes.”

4 Bring books or games.

Books and crossword puzzles keep your mind occupied in the booth during light traffic periods.

5 Play car-spotting games to help pass the time.

Pick two specific types of cars, and guess which one will pass your booth first. Count the number of cars of a certain color that you see in one day—then try to break your record.

6 Use the intercom.

The booth should have an intercom for communicating with other booths. Chat every now and then, but be aware that supervisors always monitor the channel.

7 Take breaks.

Take advantage of all your rest breaks—at least two 15-minute breaks plus a half hour for lunch. A brisk walk or calisthenics will increase blood flow and make you more alert on the job. Reading—but not watching television—can also be an invigorating break.

8 Drink fluids.

Staying hydrated will keep you sharp and reduce lethargy. Avoid coffee, which dehydrates.

Be Aware

Toll plazas at lightly traveled exits are generally preferable to busy interchanges. Try to arrange for work assignments at less-populated areas and avoid the first or last entrance/exit of turnpikes. Time seems to pass more quickly the busier you are, however.