Finding a Place to Work

The first thing you need to think about when planning your new homebuilt computer has nothing to do with parts, performance, or configuration.

You need to find a place to work.

Staking Out your Work Area

Professionals and die-hard home computer builders usually have work benches that are dedicated to nothing but computer work. But most home computer builders are not so lucky. Still, most people can find someplace to build their new PC. Here are some things to think about when deciding where you will work:

• You need a sturdy table or workbench. Ideally, you’ll want a table that's big enough to hold a computer laying on its side, your tools, the parts you are installing, and any technical documents or instructions you will be using.

• The table should be clean and non-metallic. If not, then you'll need to cover it with a non-conductive surface such as a plastic table cloth or a piece of plywood or Masonite.

• Your work area should be well-lit and have a grounded AC power outlet that you can plug a
surge suppressor into so you can test your new PC once it's assembled.

• Avoid places that are damp, subject to temperature extremes, dirty, or dusty.

• If possible, try to avoid carpeted rooms. Carpeting tends to generate a lot of static when you walk across it. (If your work area is carpeted and your parents, spouse, or landlord object to your ripping it up, then just then pay special attention to anti-static precautions.)

COMPUTER SAFETY TIPS

Backups

The most important precaution against any risk of data loss is a full, up-to-date backup. Tape backup drives are the wisest form of insurance for your computer, and good tape drives are very inexpensive ($150.00 or less). This will protect you against lightning, fire, theft, accidental data loss, virus damage, hardware “crashes”, etc. The two most important things to remember about backups are 1) Backup regularly - full backups weekly and partial backups daily is best and 2) Keep a full backup in another location, such as at home or in a safety deposit box. This way you will not lose your data in a fire or if the computer is stolen.

Telephone line danger

One potential threat to your computer which most often goes unnoticed is your modem connection. Surges and power fluctuations can hit your system through your phone line and cause serious damage. Make sure your power strip or battery backup has telephone line protection. During a heavy electrical storm, your safest phone line protection is to disconnect the phone jack from your modem.
Battery backups

A single power outage is not as damaging to your computer as the extreme surges and drops in power that occur during a blackout, brownout, or just your ordinary lightning storm. Your computer is very sensitive to power fluctuations - protect yourself against this. Uninterrupted Power Supplies (UPS) are available at most any computer store or Office supply store. The "Blackout Buster" is a very good battery backup which also provides superior protection through your modem/fax/telephone line. The Blackout Buster retails for $129.00 and is available at Comp USA.

Turn off your computer

Many of our clients are on networks and have made it a habit to keep the computers on all the time. Monsoon season is the exception to the rule. Whenever a storm or brownout is expected, your safest strategy is to turn off all computers and monitors. These precautions can save you a great deal of frustration and loss.

10 Occupational Health and Safety Procedure (OHS) this is about Safety and Anti-Static Rules

1. When possible, try to avoid working in carpeted areas. Carpeting greatly increases static buildup within your body.

2. Personal protective equipment are correctly used.

3. Hazard/risks in the workplace and their corresponding indicators are identified to minimize
or eliminate risk to co-workers, workplace and environment.

4. Always handle electronic components by a non-conducting (non-metallic) edge. Don’t touch the pins or other connectors.

5. Read and follow instructions on the manual carefully.

6. Do not eat, drink or smoke while assembling the computer.

7. When working on a computer avoid places that are damp, subject to temperature extremes, dirty, or dusty.

8. The table should be clean and non-metallic to avoid short circuits.

9. Always disconnect a computer from the AC power and from any powered peripherals while you are working on it.

10. Never plug an ATX power supply into AC power while adding and connecting cards of motherboard.