

Selecting Your Ergonomic Chair

Contact the EH&S Ergonomics Program regarding the purchase of fully-adjustable chairs.

Chair Properties

When workstations go wrong, the first place people typically look is their chair. Providing an ergonomic chair does not benefit the user if the user does not know how to use and adjust the chair.

Consider the following features when looking for in a suitable office chair:

- Chair height can be adjusted
- Provides adequate lower back support
- Width is appropriate for the individual using the chair
- Seat depth is adjustable
- Fully adjustable or removable armrests
- Five-prong base
- Breathable fabric
- Chair adjustability features provide a good fit for most people



Height

When seated, adjust the height of your chair so that your feet are well-supported on the floor. Your hips should be slightly higher than your knees.



Lower Back Support

When seated in the chair, adjust the height of the backrest so the lumbar support fits the natural curve of your lower back. The angle of the back support should allow you to sit with your upper body slightly reclined (at least 95 degrees).



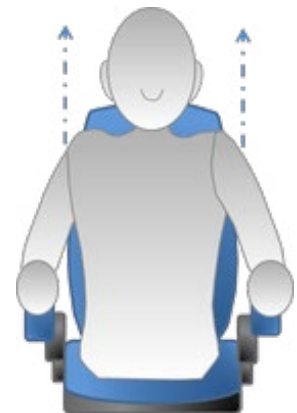
Seat Depth

When seated in the chair, the seat pan (the portion of the chair you sit on) should allow you to use the back support without the front of the seat pressing against the back of your knees. If the seat is too deep, slide the seat pan back to reduce the depth of the seat pan. The adjustment lever is usually located under the front of the chair, much like the lever that moves the seat forward and backward in a car. If your seat pan does not adjust, try using a lumbar support or pillow to shorten the seat pan. You should be able to fit two-three fingers between the front of the seat and the backs of your knees.



Width

The seat pan should be wide enough so it does not apply pressure to the outside of your thighs. Conversely, the seat should be narrow enough to be able to reach the armrests when they are properly adjusted.



Armrests

Armrests can provide support thereby reducing the stress on your shoulders and back. Be careful as the armrests should not prevent the chair from being drawn close to the desk, nor restrict your body's natural movements. If your armrests cannot be adjusted to allow for this, then consider removing or replacing them. Also keep in mind that soft armrests will minimize contact stresses on your elbows. Gel wraps can be purchased to go over armrests that may be too hard.

