



SARACEN
OFFICE INTERIORS

Choosing an Office Chair

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Introduction

Choosing an Office Chair

Sitting is the most common position used at work and those most at risk are office workers who can spend between 20 and 30 hours per week in a seated position. Technology now means that office workers no longer get up and walk to the next office to speak to colleagues in other departments; the use of email has made this too time consuming for the modern workplace. The consequence is that office workers no longer benefit from constant changes of position and breaks from their workstations.

This has resulted in health problems for many workers including visual fatigue, physical fatigue, stress and neck and back pain. Absence from work as a result has a significant impact on productivity and can lead to substantial damages being awarded to employees for disorders such as RSI and seating-related injuries.

Comfortable seating, correctly adjusted and used properly, makes an essential contribution to a healthy and productive working life.

So what to look for in an office chair?

Essentially all well-designed office chairs should:-

- + Support the spine
- + Prevent any restriction of the circulation of blood in the legs
- + Provide long term support for a wide range of users
- + Be easily adjusted both in seat height and height/tilt of seat back
- + Allow users freedom of movement and easy changes in posture

The Arm Rest

- + Armrests support the neck and shoulder muscles and also take some of the bodies weight off of the legs and buttocks.
- + They should support the arms in a horizontal position and should be adjustable where possible.
- + Armrests should not restrict the user's posture or the ability of the chair to slide under the workstation.

The Back Rest

- + Look for a back rest designed to support the users back in all sitting positions
- + It should give lumbar support and should always have a forward convexity
- + A backrest height adjustment allows the user to change the location of the lumbar support to suit their personal preferences and gives support to the upper back.

The Seat

- ✦ Seat height should be adjustable to suit all heights, allowing workers to rest their feet firmly on the floor or foot rest.
- ✦ The seat should be wide enough to encompass all hip widths
- ✦ Rounded (or waterfall) front edges should be well padded to ensure that they do not cause discomfort to the thighs or back of knees.
- ✦ Seat tilt gives better posture and allow changes of position during the day

Footrests

- ✦ Footrests should allow the sole of the foot to make a 90° angle with the floor
- ✦ They should be independent of the chair
- ✦ They are necessary for all workers who cannot comfortably place their feet on the floor when seated correctly at their workstation.

Types of Chair to Consider - De-bunking the Jargon

Swivel Seating



Typists Chair – typically a small swivel chair on a five-star base with castors. Can usually be fitted with optional armrests. Usually has a small backrest and is adjustable by height using a gas cylinder or mechanical means

Use: for all traditional, secretarial work but not really suitable for long periods if keyboard or VDU use



Clerical Chair - Often a typist chair with armrests or may be a simple adjustable chair with arms but no back adjustment.

Use - Suitable for varied office tasks but should not be used for long periods of work.



Operator or VDU Chair – Designed for use at keyboards and VDU’s over long periods. This is a swivel chair on a five star base with castors, usually has optional armrests, and should have a backrest giving good lumbar support and is adjustable for height and reach using gas cylinder or mechanical means.

Use: for all prolonged use of VDU/keyboards



Management Chair – a larger swivel chair usually fitted with armrests – having a five star base and castors. Usually available in medium and high back versions with seat height adjustment. Normally has a rear seat tilt facility.



Executive Chair – A very large high back swivel chair with arms on five star base and castors. Usually with a heavily upholstered seat and back and with a head support. Seat height adjustment by air cylinder or mechanical means. Usually these chairs have a rear tilt facility.



Draughtperson's Chair - these are high swivel chairs on a five star base with glides rather than castors and adjustable foot support. Often a high version of a typist or operator chair.

Use – for work at higher levels and sometimes used at checkouts or as a counter stool

Non Swivel Chairs



Visitor Chair - A side chair or armchair on a four - leg /cantilever – may be stackable.



Conference chair/boardroom chair - side chair or armchair – often having a wooden finish on the arms for boardroom use. Smaller chairs are available for small conference rooms or training rooms. They may be available to stack or link and can have optional writing trays.



Reception Seating - Usually low and deeply upholstered/ padded, modular unit seating which can be combined with coffee tables and corner units to create conversation areas if space allows.

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