

Proper Sitting Posture

A good work environment can reduce the stress on your body. Because most people sit the major part of their work day, proper sitting is important for your body health.

What is the most important part about having a good workstation?



The office workstation should let the worker sit and carry out their duties in comfort while allowing for voluntary changes in the working position. There are three contact areas in the work space that affect the worker's posture: the seat, the work surface (commonly it is a desk top or keyboard) and the floor. To ensure the most comfortable posture possible, two of these factors have to be adjustable.

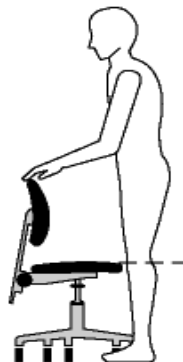
If you can afford to do nothing else, **a fully adjustable chair is the undisputable "must"**. The other, and perhaps the most preferable option, would be a fully adjustable desk. However the price or size of such a desk may not make this option practical. Another effective (and cheaper) option is to use an adjustable chair and footrest to secure postural comfort.

What is important when selecting a chair?

- controls that are easy to operate from sitting position
- a seat that adjusts for both height and tilt
- a seat that does not put pressure on the back of thighs or knees
- a seat with a front edge that curves towards the floor
- breathable, non-slippery fabric on the seat
- a backrest shaped to support the lower back
- a stable five-point base
- wheels or casters suitable for the type of flooring
- a swivel mechanism
- armrests that can be adjusted to the elbow height and shoulder width when your upper arms are hanging down and your forearms are at about a 90 degree angle to the upper arms.
- armrests that do not interfere with free movements within the workstation (extending less than 10 inches from the back of seat).

How do I adjust a chair for my height?

Stand in front of the chair. Adjust the height so the highest point of the seat, (when in the horizontal position), is just below the knee cap.





- Sit on the chair and keep your feet flat on the floor.
- Make sure that the clearance between the front edge of the seat and the lower part of the legs (your calves) fits a clenched fist (about 2 inches).



- Adjust the back rest forwards and backwards as well as up and down so it fits the hollow in your lower back.



- Sit upright with your arms hanging loosely by your sides. Bend your elbows at about a right angle (90 degrees) and adjust the armrest(s) height until they barely touch the undersides of the elbows.
- Remove the armrests from the chair if this level can not be achieved or if armrests, in their lowest adjustment, elevate your elbows even slightly.
- Tilt the seat itself forwards or backwards if you prefer.

What adjustments should I make if the workstation (desk) is at a fixed height?

Once your chair is properly adjusted for your height, check if you can sit at the workstation comfortably with your legs underneath. If you cannot fit your legs under the workstation or there is not enough space to move them freely, your workstation is too low for you and **you should not use such a workstation on a regular basis!** If you can sit comfortably but need to elevate your arms in order to place them over the work surface, your workstation is too high. Adjust the chair height so your elbows are about the same height as the work surface. **Use a footrest if you cannot place your feet flat on the floor.**