

Common Problems with Office Chairs



Seat Pan



Chair Stability



Chair Adjustability



Backrest Adjustability

(height & horizontal backrest movement – forward/backward)



Armrests



Chairmats

Hazards

- The seat is too small for the user and provides inadequate support to lower body.
- The seat is too large requiring user to sit forward or the seat puts pressure behind the knees.
- The seat is too narrow and does not provide adequate sitting space for user.
- The seat is inadequately padded and does not provide adequate cushioning, particularly for the coccyx.
- The front edge of the seat is not rounded and padded so that it puts pressure behind the knees.

- It is possible for the chair to tip over when the user leans forward or sideways too far.
- An office chair (or stool) may roll away when used on non-carpeted floors.

- Chair is set to incorrect height for user.
- The chair user does not know how to use the adjustment mechanisms.
- Broken adjustment mechanisms.

- Height and horizontal backrest position are set at incorrect position for user, providing inadequate lumbar support.
- Adjustment mechanism is broken.

- Armrests interfere with correct positioning at workstation

- Office chair may catch on the edge of the chair mat and tip.

Solutions

- Try a different chair with larger/smaller seat dimensions. Chair user should feel comfortable and well supported in their office chair and able to sit back comfortably in the seat with back firmly against backrest.
- There should be space, about the width of a clenched fist, between the back of the knee and the front of the chair.
- For optimal comfort, the seat should extend approximately 2cm from the hips on either side of the chair.
- Provide a new office chair with adequate cushioning, minimal contouring and woollen fabric covering.
- Ensure that all new chairs purchased have a well padded and rounded WATERFALL EDGE

- Ensure the chair has a 5 star (leg) base. Replace any office chairs with less than a 5 star base.
- If chairs (or stools) are used on non-carpeted surfaces, ensure they are fitted with glides rather than castors.

- Correct chair height is achieved when the feet are firmly placed on the ground (not tucked back onto the chair base). If the correct position cannot be achieved, a footstool may be used. This will allow feet to be placed flat on the footstool with thighs just clearing the edge of the chair.
- Ensure chairs are inspected periodically using the Office/Workplace Environment/Safety Inspection form.

- The correct backrest height is achieved when the backrest is firmly positioned in the lumbar region (the inward curved portion) of the lower back. The correct horizontal backrest position is achieved when the user is sitting comfortably upright at their workstation at 90° - 100°

- Remove armrests from office chair if unsuitable for user.
- When purchasing new office chairs, specify adjustable armrests that are set back from the front edge of the seat to ensure proper positioning at the workstation is able to be achieved.

- Alert users of mats of risk of injury.

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