

## Choosing a chair

For people who are within the norm, to quote from Karen Jacobs, Ergonomics for Therapists<sup>1</sup>, page 227, "The features of an ergonomically well designed chair are as follows:

- The seat height is easily adjustable, with pneumatic pedestal base.
- The backrest is easily adjustable to support the lumbar spine vertically (height) and horizontally (forward and backward) and is narrow enough so that the worker's arms or torso do not strike it if rotation is required.
- The seat tilts forward and backward independently of the backrest. This feature is useful with fine detail work or office work.
- The seat edge is curved to reduce pressure behind the knees.
- Enough space is provided between the back of the chair and the seat to accommodate the buttocks.
- The adjustable armrests (optional) are small and low enough to fit under the work surface and to support the back when the worker works close to the work surface.
- The base has five points to prevent the chair from tipping.
- The worker can make adjustments easily with one hand while seated.
- The upholstery fabric is comfortable; reduces heat transfer in warm climates and static electricity in cold weather; and is stain resistant or easily cleaned.
- Training should be provided to ensure that workers are familiar with the features and adjustments of an optimally fitting chair.

An ergonomic chair, as with all ergonomic equipment, will not be effective unless it fits the worker properly. Workers must be trained to adjust the chair or equipment for proper fit and use. An excellent role for therapists who consult in industry is to help educate purchasing agents, managers, and chief executives about the medical cost savings of purchasing adjustable equipment and teaching employees how to use it."

---

<sup>1</sup> Butterworth-Heinemann (January 1, 1995) ISBN: 0750695307