

Adjusting your Office Chair

There are many styles of office chair available, you should take the time to familiarise yourself with your chair and if necessary enquire locally about the availability of instructions. You should be able to freely adjust your chair depending on the work you are doing and how you are feeling. A number of people sit on high specification chairs without thinking about setting it up to suit them. You may be surprised how much more comfortable you could be by making some simple adjustments.

The minimum standard office chairs have 5 prong base with castors suitable for the floor surface, (carpet or smooth). They will have adjustable height and lumbar support. Many chairs have additional functionality which can be fine tuned to suit each individual.

“Hot-desk” users usually need to adjust their chair each time they sit at a different desk.

The following is a short summary:

1. Height adjustment: your chair will have a lever which you can use to adjust the gas lift. The position of this will vary: why not try it out.

The optimum seat height allows you to sit at your desk with your shoulders relaxed and elbows bent at a 90° angle, very slightly higher than the surface of the desk.

Having adjusted your seat height you will only need a foot rest if you cannot now position your feet firmly on the floor.

If your knees touch the underside of your desk you may need to have your desk height altered. This is not uncommon and there are some simple solutions to this problem.

2. You will need to adjust the height of the lumbar support; the mechanism for adjusting this varies with manufacturer & model, again you are unlikely to damage your chair by investigating how it works.

The fullest part of the lumbar support should fit into the curve of your lower back so this will vary between individuals depending on their height.

Some chairs even have inflatable lumbar supports to offer greater adjustability.

The following functionality varies between chairs.

3. If you have shorter legs the seat pad depth may be adjusted to allow you to reach the lumbar support while sitting with your knees at a 90° angle. If this is not possible you may need an alternative chair.
4. There may be a “rake” which means the chair has a fluid movement backwards & forwards, many people do not use this function.
5. The seat angle may tilt forward opening the angle between the seat and the lumbar support to more than > a 90° angle. This is down to individual preference as some people feel do not use it as they feel they are being pushed forwards. However it can be helpful in relieving tension in the lumbar area.
6. Many chairs are supplied with arms; if you have “fixed arms” you may find they cause you to sit forwards preventing you from using the lumbar support effectively. If this is the case you may be able to remove them easily with an Allen key. T style arms are mostly adjustable in height and angle position.
7. Most people do not need a neck support.