

The Perfect Fit With Your Adjustable Chair

We all use adjustable chairs but most of us have never been taught how to adjust the chair for the best personal fit. The Occupational Safety and Health Section of the Labour Department has found during ergonomic assessments that one of the contributing factors to discomfort was improper chair adjustment. The article below by Physiotherapist, Dr. Melissa Walcott Pusey, Dip.PT, tDPT, will give you pointers on how to achieve the best fit with your adjustable chair.

The Fully Adjustable Chair

A fully ergonomic chair will have adjustability in chair height, seat pan or seat depth, back rest, arm rest, adjustable levers, and maybe head rest. All ergonomic chairs have a minimum five base support. Here is a brief description of how the parts of the chair should be adjusted.



Diagram Showing Areas of Adjustability in an Ergonomic Chair



Diagram Showing Chair Adjustment Levers

Chair height is the distance from the seat of the chair to the floor as shown in the diagram below. When this is adjusted effectively the person sitting in the chair should have their hips and knees at 90° or a right angle with your feet touching the floor in appropriate work shoes.



Diagram Showing Ideal Chair Height

Seat pan or seat depth should allow for the employees thighs to be supported with two fingers breath between the seat and the back of the knee.

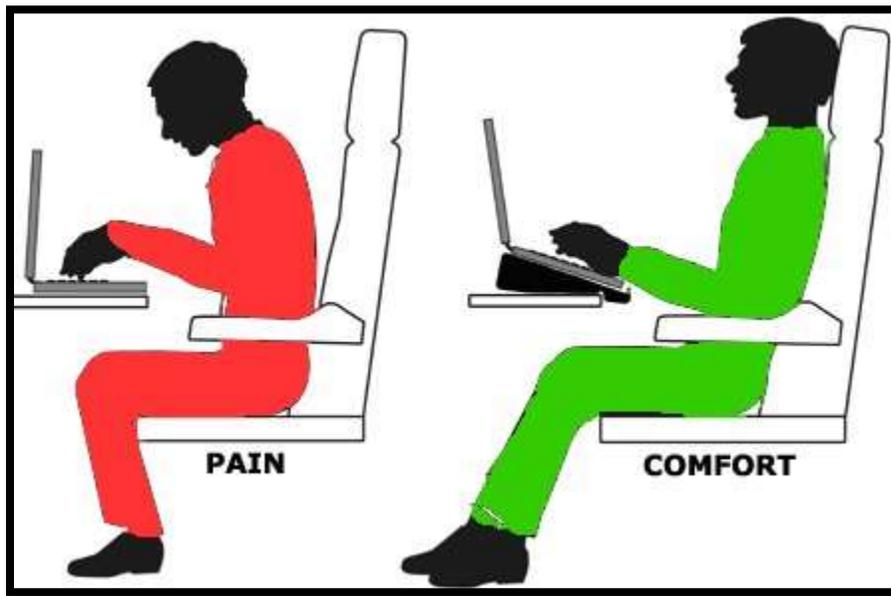


Diagram Showing Ideal Seat Pan Depth

Back rest is the rounded area found toward the lower part of the chair back. This should be positioned at the indentation in the person's lower back. This is achieved by raising or lowering the back of the chair. This angle varies significantly between individuals but the support in the chair should be adjusted first before trying external back supports.

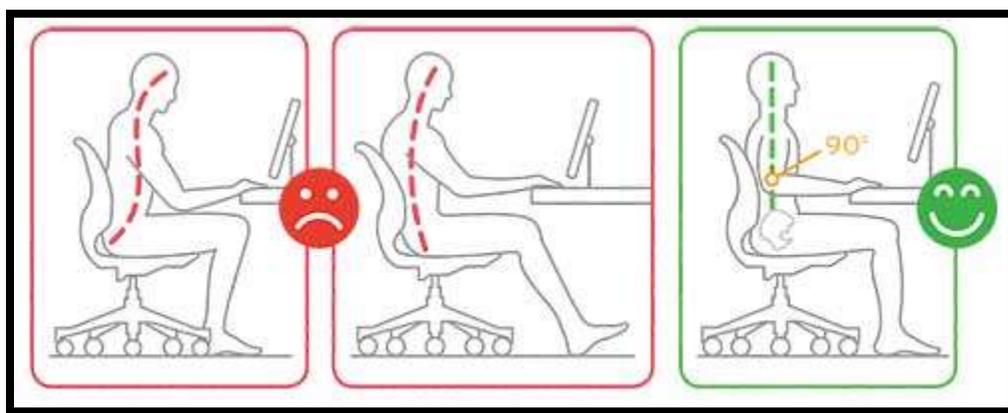


Diagram Showing Appropriate Back Rest Position

Adjustable arm rest should support the forearm with the shoulders at rest and the elbows at 90°. Some chairs have armrest that swivel, allowing the forearms to remain in contact with armrest during activities. Other chairs allow for the armrest to move in and out depending on the width of the person sitting in the chair, these should be positioned so that there is a hands breath between the person's body and the arm rest.



Diagram Showing Ideal Arm Rest

Five Point base of the chair prevents the chair from tipping when it is rolled from one place to another or when the employee shifts in the chair. The wheels/ casters of the chair should be a minimum of 2 inches in diameter and the material used depends on if the wheels will be used on a hard wood floor or on carpet.



Diagram Showing Five Point Base of a Chair

The Occupational Safety and Health Section of the Labour Department can be contacted at 535-1523 or labour@labour.gov.bb if you require further information on ergonomics.