

What Makes a Good Chair?

THE SEAT PAN

No one chair will fit every person. Different styles of chairs should be made available that meet the following criteria:

- Height and depth should be adjustable to accommodate the various heights and leg lengths of people.
- The tilt should also be adjustable to allow for various angles.
- Waterfall (sloping slightly forward) front is advised to reduce pinching and to improve blood flow.
- Seats should be padded and rounded at the end.
- Height – 16”–21”
- Depth – 15”–17”
- Width – 18”–19”
- Seat tilt back 0°–10°
- Seat tilt forward 10°

BACKREST

The height should be adjustable in order to provide proper lumbar support. Both horizontal and vertical adjustments are recommended.

- Minimum Backrest height – 15”
- Minimum Backrest width – 12”
- Lumbar support – 6”–9” above pan surface
- Seat pan/backrest angle 90°-105°

ARMRESTS

Properly designed armrests help support upper arms, back and neck. However, armrests are not recommended if they interfere with the desk height and prevent the person from getting close enough to the keyboard. If used, they should be of proper length and width so that the arms rest comfortably and perfectly. The armrests should be removable if the person desires. They must be padded in order to support the shoulders. Armrests should be adjustable in two directions: up and down or in and out. If arms are not adjustable, then chairs without arms are most desirable.

- Length – approximately 8”
- Width – 2”–3”

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Chair bases should have five points for stability.
- Chair casters should be appropriate for the floor surface covering.
- Adjustment controls should be sturdy and operable while seated.
- Fabric should be permeable (allowing it to breathe) so as to encourage blood flow and to avoid build-up of perspiration.
- All users should receive “hands-on” training on chair adjustments.
- Even the best-designed chair will not prevent back discomfort if used statically for prolonged periods of time.