

Have a seat

Your comfort starts with proper chair adjustment

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Productivity on the job is very often related to the physical comfort of our workday environments and the efficiency of the furniture in our work spaces. One of the most important pieces of furniture in the contemporary computer-driven office is the chair—the place where most of us spend many hours of every day.

Because proper sitting posture helps to reduce low back discomfort and maintain good ergonomic positioning, how the chair is adjusted for height and personal comfort is key. The process for determining proper chair “fit” begins with evaluating sitting posture. A coworker can help with this by determining if your chair is at the right height and angle for you. The following guidelines can help you get the most out of your chair for maximum comfort:

Chair Height: To sit properly, your feet should be flat on the ground, your thighs approximately parallel to the floor, and your hips at 90 degrees (see

Photo 1). The key to sitting properly is to have the knees and hips in line with each other, or the knees slightly below the hips. This is especially important for those who have, or have had, low-back issues. If the knees are higher than the hips (see Photo 2), the risk for low-back discomfort may increase.

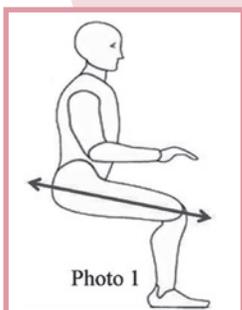


Photo 1

Controls: Many chairs have up to four main controls, not just one. If you have a seat pan adjustment, it is important to adjust this to help accommodate your stature. To determine if your seat pan is adjusted properly, do the following:



Photo 2

Place your hand at the edge of your seat. If your entire hand fits snugly underneath your thigh (see Photo 3), or if you can fit at least two to three fingers



Photo 3

between the edge of the seat and the back of your knees, your seat pan depth is appropriate for your stature.

If you place your hand at the edge of the seat underneath your thighs and you cannot touch your knees, then your seat pan needs to be adjusted.

The seat pan lever is usually on the lefthand side of the chair, or there may be a bar that goes across the front underside of the chair. Lift this lever up, slide the seat pan to the desired depth and then release the lever to lock your seat into place.

Some chairs have pictures on the paddles to help guide you on adjustment, others do not (see Photo 4). Regardless, the paddles should all be in the same position for most chairs. Here's how some of the paddles function:

To use the FT (forward tilt) function (if your chair has one), lean back in the chair, bring the SA (seat angle) paddle to the “up” position, and rotate the FT (forward tilt) lever clockwise to allow the seat to angle forward. To lock in position, depress the

SA (seat angle) paddle into the locked position. (Note: This is the most difficult chair control to operate, but this function is only necessary if you want the front of your chair lower than the back.)

To change SA (seat angle), pull the paddle up while seated, then push the paddle down to lock the desired angle in place.

To lower the SH (seat height), pull the lever up while seated. To raise, pull the paddle up with your weight off the seat.

To adjust the BA (back angle) while seated, pull the paddle up. When the desired angle is achieved, push the paddle down to lock.

To position the BH (back height), turn the knob counter-clockwise to loosen, move the chair back to the desired height, and re-tighten. (Note: Some chairs do not have knobs as shown,

but instead have lever or ratchet back height adjustments. If you have a ratchet back height adjustment, simply lift the back into the desired position and lock it into place. Lift the back all the way to the top and it will reset itself.)

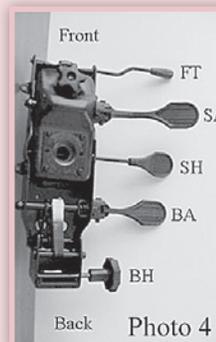


Photo 4