RISK SIMPLIFIED

Computer Workstation Chair Ergonomics

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Awkward seated postures and lengthy periods of sitting may increase your risk of injury. It is important that you are comfortable while sitting, as remaining in an awkward seated posture can increase your fatigue level, tighten muscles, or irritate nerves. When your body is fatigued or in discomfort, the risk of injury increases, and productivity and accuracy decrease. An awkward seated posture is especially risky if it is combined with lengthy periods of sitting, or other awkward body postures. The following process can be used to assist employees in achieving a neutral seated posture.

Before evaluating seated postures, it is important to understand the adjustment features of the chair in question, as functions may vary greatly between chair models. Chair manufacturers publish operator's guides explaining these features. It is also important to understand what seating options are available within your organization in the event that alternative seating is necessary.

While making adjustments, be sure the chair provides upper and lower back support. Provide the user with a demonstration of all of the adjustment features. If the chair does not provide the necessary range adjustability necessary for operator comfort, it is recommended that another model be provided.

Step #1 — Adjust Seat Height
Adjust the chair's seat pan height so that user's feet rest comfortably on the floor and the knees are slightly lower than the hips.

Step #2 — Adjust Seat Depth

Adjust the seat pan depth so that there is a 2 to 4-inch gap between the back of the knees and the front edge of the chair when the user's back is supported by the backrest. Taller users will need to pull the seat pan from the chair back to expand it; shorter users will need to push the seat pan towards the chair back to collapse it.
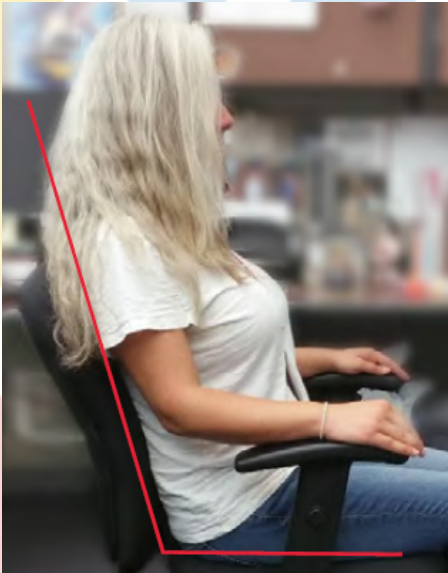

Step # 3 — Adjust Chair Back Height

Adjust the height of the back of the chair so that the curve of the chair back fits into the deepest part of the curve in the user's lower back.
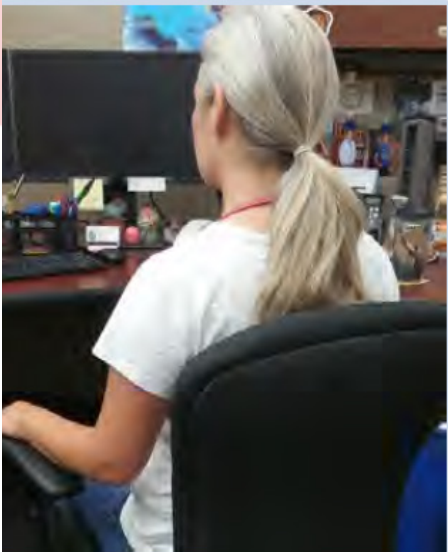
Step #4 – Adjust Chair Back Tilt

Adjust the tilt of the back of the chair so that the back of the chair is upright or tilted slightly back for comfort.

Step # 5 – Adjust Armrests

Adjust the armrests so that they are slightly below the elbows when the user's shoulders are relaxed. When adjusted properly, the user's arms should have room to hang comfortably at the side. It is also critical that armrests to not interfere with workstation tasks such as typing, writing, and mousing.

For any additional questions regarding this topic or related regulatory requirements, contact the PRISM Risk Control Department.