

WINFORMA

KEEPING YOU INFORMED



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Special points of interest:

- Buying the right ergonomic chair takes time, trial, and training for best results.
- Workers' compensation changes continue.
- Alternative seating technology.
- Advances in LCD technology vs. the traditional CRT.
- WIN Member Update.

About WINFORMA: Our newsletter is aptly named WINForma, which means Worksite International Network (WIN) Information. The WIN consists of our trained and mentored consultants, employer and insurance clients, physicians and ergonomic product vendors all working together for the same purpose to prevent and manage work injuries more effectively. You will find a variety of articles to interest all of our members.

SELECTING AND BUYING ERGONOMIC CHAIRS FOR MULTIPLE USERS

Perhaps one of the most challenging facility issues for many companies is deciding when to replace existing chairs with new ergonomic chairs and deciding how to select them effectively. This is no easy task as fitting the corporate population and trying to please every end-user is an undaunting task. There are many issues to consider in the selection and buying process. They include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Understand the needs of your corporate population.
2. Take an inventory of existing chairs. Identify broken and outdated chairs.
3. Identify the desired features you want on the chair.
4. Determine your budget.
5. Create a plan of action once new chairs are installed.

Understanding the needs of your corporate population is essential to identifying the type of chairs that will be most effective. Facilities or purchasing should work in conjunction with the staff or consulting Ergonomist to identify the stature of employees and the type of tasks performed through the day as well as their overall satisfaction with existing chairs. Chairs are designed with specific features that not all employees need or want. For example, the forward tilt or decline option allows for the employee to position the chair in a forward lean-

ing position over the workstation for desk reading and writing tasks. If the staff is primarily sales or telecommutes frequently, this option may not be necessary. To fit the majority of users however, a seat depth or seat slide mechanism that offers 2-4" of depth adjustment will fit far more users, as will height, width and pivot adjustable armrests. Back height adjustments that include an adjustable lumbar support is also helpful. A pedestal height range of 5" is the usual standard from 15"-20" or 16"-21" however, purchasing a 7" lift may fit more individuals. Furthermore, the range of adjustability in chair height, seat width and arm rest width is essential so that the chair can fit from a petite female to a large male. Other features to consider that are very important include cushion comfort and usability of paddles to easily adjust the chair for a better fit.

Taking an inventory of existing chairs is very important to identify how many chairs really need to be replaced. The date and model of the chair can be identified by a small tag under the seat pan that commonly tells the date of delivery (approximate year manufactured). If you are still using chairs from 1990-95, it is most likely time to replace these chairs as the cushions and other parts are probably excessively worn or broken, especially if the chairs are used for more than one shift. Also, chairs

CALIFORNIA WORKERS' COMPENSATION UPDATE

Senator Charles Poochigan contributed significantly to last year's reform actions. Recently, Poochigan introduced three new workers' compensation legislations for the 2005-06 session.

SB177-Alternative Dispute Resolution: This bill will allow the State of CA to use Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in managing the state's workers' compensation claims. The State is a legally uninsured employer and thus is not able to establish an ADR system under existing law.

SB178-Group Self-Insurance: This bill will allow more medium-sized employers to join group self-insurance plans. Group self-insurance offers employers more control over their workers' compensation claims and financial savings over traditional insurance plans.

SB179-Workers' Compensation Fraud: This bill will improve the workers' compensation fraud enforcement efforts at the local level by allowing the state to provide three-year grants.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 9-10, 2005: NeoCon West, LA Mart, LA, CA. Alison will speak on March 9. Phone 800-677-6278, www.merchandisemart.com

March 21-24, 2005: Applied Ergonomics Conference, New Orleans, LA. Sponsored by IIE. 800-494-0460 or www.appliedergo.org.

April 27-29, 2005: Ergonomic Worksite Analysis: Theory and Practice for Growth and Profitability. Monterey, CA. Casa Munras Garden Court Hotel. 3-day introductory workshop for office ergonomics. Instructed by Alison. Call 888-288-4463 or visit www.worksiteinternational.com for brochure.

June 21-23, 2005: The Eastern Ergonomics Conference and Exposition, New York, New York. www.ergoexpa.com.

“The human resource department is not responsible for taking care of you: you are. Know what you are good at, make sure your results are equal to your expectations, and manage yourself. Continually ask yourself, “What should MY contribution be?”

Peter Drucker,
Post - Capitalist Society

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CHAIR SELECTION FOR Mx USERS (CONTINUED)

with a four- legged base should be discarded immediately as they are prone to tipping backwards. Deciding to eliminate and replace existing chairs has its share of problems. Convincing employees that their old reliable chair has reached the end of its life and its time to separate from it can be a challenge. Yes, it is true, that employees can suffer from *chair separation anxiety!* Allowing the end-user to participate in a chair trial may help to lessen the anxiety.

Other decisions must be made as to whether to repair or reject many of these older chairs. Refurbishing and replacing parts may be a good money saving option if the existing chairs are still under warranty and worth saving. **Significant advancement in chair features have occurred over the last ten years.** There are hundreds of different types of chairs on the market these days, each with some very similar features while others have some very unique features. Here is a list of features that are most essential to fit a majority of the population:

- Adjustable seat back height with good lumbar

support

- Adjustable seat depth
- Adjustable armrests in height, width and pivot. (4" or > adjustability)
- Seat tilt for recline, neutral to forward (decline) postures.
- Easy to reach and activate paddles or levers.
- Tilt tension that is easy to reach as well.
- Minimum of a 5" pedestal height

Other features to consider are:

- High back rest as well as medium back rest
- Active adjustments where the user makes the changes vs. passive adjustments where the chair adjusts synchronously to the user's movements.
- Temporpedic or memory foam cushion
- Ease of adjustability and usability
- Maintenance and service
- Warranty
- Investment

Determining your budget:

Once the decision to purchase new chairs has been made, determining the budget that will work for your organization is required. It is important to negotiate with vendors for

the chairs you are most interested in. Don't be overly tempted by inclusion deals either that include the chairs with workstation purchase. If this opportunity arises, evaluate the chair to see what standard features are included. Request that the vendors allow you to use the chairs for trial for a week or two after you have narrowed the field of choice. Carefully screen the maintenance and service contract and anticipate at least a 10-15 year warranty these days. Also, determine if the vendor will provide any instructional education to your employees regarding how to fit and use the chair for the best use. If they don't include this benefit, than it is imperative that it be provided through other means.

Educating end users in how to use the new chairs once they arrive is the most important step, yet most often overlooked. Users will be very unhappy with the new chairs if they don't fit correctly and fit is based on making the appropriate adjustments. Using an ergonomic chair is not intuitive for a majority of people. Expect to spend 20 minutes minimum explaining the features and setting the chair for best fit.

ERGONOMIC PRODUCT SHOWROOM

ErgoActiv Inc., a German based company has recently entered the US marketplace with a new alternative stool, the **GYRO**, designed to be used for short term or intermittent sitting solutions. The unique design features a rounded base that allows the end-user to easily weight shift to reach near or within arms reach. The

rounded base offers ongoing stimulation of the nervous system, trunk and lower extremities while seated. The stool can be used for computer tasking, desk top work, forward leaning tasks as well as counter work that requires partial sit/stand options. The design offers a small



mushroom cushioned top (12" or 16") that allows for a slight forward tilt when the user is seated. The rounded base allows for easy mobility with a slight rocking motion while seated. The pedestal adjusts 16.5"-22.5" with higher stems available. To learn more about this product or to give it a try, contact Stephanie Koehler at 831-620-1383.



**Ergonomic Worksite Analysis:
Theory and Practice for
Growth and Profitability**
April 27-29, 2005
Monterey, CA
www.worksiteinternational.com

Increase your Earning Potential Through Professional Development

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(Chairs...continued from page 2) ■
Knowing how to use the chair will maximize employee productivity and your investment. Education should include how to set the lumbar cushion on the back height, how to use the recline, neutral and forward tilt options with the appropriate tasks, the best working height for keyboard use and desk work and setting the armrests. Most importantly, recognize the inherent value of the ergonomic chair as this investment is essential to employee health, comfort and productivity. Just as computers have become

essential for employee productivity, so has the ergonomic chair. Let your investment reflect a commitment to quality and longevity for your organization and your employees. After all, it is the human asset that is most valuable in today's knowledge-based companies where seated work is the most essential function.

THE BENEFITS OF LCD FLAT-PANEL MONITORS

Office real estate is at a premium these days and is probably just one reason why flat panel monitors have gained so much popularity. The typical workstation surface is 60" W x 24"-30"D and is often substantially limited by multiple pieces of equipment such as the traditional CRT (cathode ray tube), keyboard, pointing device, telephone and printer, at minimum.

Increasingly, consumers and businesses are retiring their large, heavy CRTs and replacing them with lightweight, space-saving, flat-panel monitors.

Furthermore, more companies are turning "green" about environmental waste and recognize the hazardous materials that the CRT has compared to the flat panel monitor. According to www.DisplaySearch.com, flat panel monitors grew to 37% of the worldwide monitor market in early 2003. In the same time, CRT monitor sales fell 21%. It is predicted that in a few more years, LCDs will dominate the market and CRTS will become obsolete.

There are many reasons for the transition and include:

- **Smaller size and lighter weight**
- **Lower cost of ownership**
- **Clear and sharp display quality**
- **Wide aspect ratio**
- **Lower environmental impact**
- **Reduced eye strain**

Size and weight is a big factor. If you have ever tried to lift a desk top monitor, you will notice that they are

heavy. The typical 21" CRT weighs up to 65 lbs, takes up significant desk top space, is difficult to move and expensive to ship. On the contrary, a 20" flat panel monitor with the same comparable viewing area weighs about 25 lbs and takes up about 9" compared to at least 20" for the CRT. This weight is important when shipping the monitors resulting in lower transportation costs and higher shipping volume.

Another advantage is the screen size. A 17" CRT screen really has only a 15" viewable area, while the same size LCD has 17" of viewable area.

Furthermore, the LCD has lower power and space requirements and that translates to lower cost of ownership over time. While the initial purchase may be somewhat higher, the long term benefits certainly offset the initial investment.

Perhaps one of the best advantages of an LCD is the visual comfort that results from the technology. The flat panel monitor technology is based on a "fixed pixel" display that is hard-wired to stay that way. In contrast a CRT display is made up of thousands of tiny phosphor dots arranged in red, blue and green. An electron gun shoots a stream of electrons back and forth across the screen, illuminating selected phosphor dots on each pass.

The LCD screen has perfect linearity, while the CRT may not be consistent and sharp across the entire screen. The LCD offers a much sharper (cont. page 4)

