How to Adjust your Chair

Sitting properly in a well-fitted chair helps to limit back strain and discomfort. Since one size does not fit all, purchase a chair that has seat, backrest and armrest adjustments.

Once you have purchased an adjustable chair, make adjustments to provide the best fit. Begin by reviewing the chair manual if it is available. Manuals or instructions are often available on the chair manufacturer’s website. Inspect the chair to determine where the adjustment controls are located.

- Sit in the chair and push your hips back as far as they can go against the chair back.
- Adjust the seat height until your feet are flat on the floor. Your hips should be equal to or slightly higher than your knees with your thighs parallel to the floor.
- Sit evenly on your hips with your weight equally distributed between your thighs and buttocks. If you are sitting on your wallet, remove it.
- Recheck your position to make sure that your hips are still against the chair backrest. There should be 1-3 fingers distance between the back of your knees and the edge of the seat. If you have a seat depth adjustment, adjust the depth of your seat if necessary.
- If you do not have a seat pan depth adjustment, you may be able to reposition the backrest in or out and adjust the angle so that the depth of the seat is better.
- Adjust the backrest height to a comfortable position. The seat back should fit into the curves of your back. Make sure your lower back is fully supported. Adjust the lumbar support if you have one, or use a small lumbar support pillow or cushion. Be sure it fits properly and it fits the size of your curve. Improperly fitted pillows or cushions may be worse than no cushion at all.
- Adjust the seat tilt if you have that option. It is usually located on the right side of the chair in front of the seat height adjustment lever. Release the lever to activate the tilt. Follow the instructions in the chair manual to operate the lever.
- Adjust the chair tilt tension so that you can recline the chair by shifting your weight rather than pushing off from your feet or hips. This mechanism is usually found under the seat in front of the pedestal.
- If you prefer not to recline, the chair tilt mechanism can be kept in a locked position or tightened as much as possible.
- Some chairs have a forward seat tilt adjustment that can be engaged to allow the seat to tilt forward. This mechanism is usually found under the right side of the chair near the front edge of the seat. Release the lock to actively engage the seat forward tilt mechanism.
- Adjust the width of the armrests if possible. You should be able to touch them with your arms close by your sides. The armrests should not interfere with your ability to get up and down from your chair.
- Adjust the height of your armrests. Position them at a level where you can place your forearms on the armrests with your shoulders relaxed.
- Adjust the armrest pivot if available to position your arms in a comfortable position.
- Remove your armrests if they do not adjust and are in your way.

Remember to change your position every 20-30 minutes to increase blood circulation, and avoid muscle fatigue.