



A Guide to Selecting a Chair

Assistive technology is a piece of equipment, device or system that provides people with practical solutions to everyday life activities. You can search our National Equipment Database www.askned.com.au to view a range of products online.

There are many factors to consider when selecting a lounge or dining chair.

Seat Height

When seated the person should have their hips slightly higher than their knees with their feet comfortably on the ground or footrest.

Some chairs have adjustable legs which allow you to adjust the height as needed.

If the chair does not have adjustable legs, you can raise the seat height using chair raisers under each leg of the chair.

Seat Depth

The seat should support the length of the buttocks and thighs. The front edge should curve downwards, ending two or three finger widths behind the knees to avoid pressure behind the knee. If the seat is too deep the back will not be supported.

Seat Width

Seat width should allow a small space on either side of the body and be close enough for the armrest to be directly below the shoulders.

Firm Seat

The seat should be firm enough to make rising easier and support good posture, yet still be comfortable for long periods of sitting.

Supportive Backrest

The backrest should support the natural curves of the spine. A lounge chair should also provide support for the head and neck.

Armrests

In a lounge chair, armrests should support under the forearm and hand, and be firm enough to assist pushing up to a standing position.

Armrest length and height for a dining chair should enable the chair to be pulled close to the table. The person's forearms should rest at about 90 degrees on the table.

Padded armrest may be more comfortable for some people.

Footrests

Feet should be supported flat on the floor, or on a footrest when seated. Some footrests support the feet only, whilst others support the lower legs.

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Electric Recliner Lift Lounge Chairs

A range of electric chairs are available which provide push button options for reclining the backrest and raising the leg rest.

They also elevate the seat into a semi-standing position to assist with standing.

- Dual motor chairs can be reclined completely flat, creating a comfortable resting position.
- Single motor chairs have the footrest move outwards and upwards and the backrest reclines back simultaneously. Dual motor chairs allow independent control of backrest, footrest and lift functions.
- Some chairs have a "wall saver" mechanism, where the entire seat glides forward as the backrest reclines to avoid striking the wall or furniture behind the chair.
- Standard chair padding is made of foam. This may be customised on chairs with zippered cushions in the backrest. Some chairs feature airbags or gel bladders that assist with reducing pressure and increasing comfort.
- The majority of chairs plug into a standard household power outlet with control switches located on a hand-held control panel which can be mounted on either side of the chair.



- Many chairs feature a battery back up in the transformer. In the event of a power failure, the battery backup will provide sufficient power to lift the chair at least once.

Office Chairs

- If a number of people use the same chair then seat height, seat depth, backrest height and position of backrest to seat should be easily adjustable.
- A five-point star base on castors provides stability and mobility.
- Chair height should permit forearms to be supported on desk or armrests.
- A footrest may be needed to support feet, so knees are at 90 degrees.
- The back support should support the natural curves of the spine.
- An open angle at the hip and thighs can reduce lower back discomfort.
- If you use an office chair for long periods of sitting, it is important to frequently stretch, move about and change position.

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