

# Office Chairs Buyers Guide



Looking for a new office chair? Office chairs come in so many different shapes, styles and colors; sometimes it's hard to know where to begin.

Most people start with finding a chair that will look good in their office or cubicle. Is your décor elegant or trendy? While a more traditional style may be appropriate for an established law firm, a tech startup is more likely to go with less formal, cutting edge décor.

We agree that looking good and coordinating with your office décor is important, but comfort is essential. Considering how much time people spend working at their desks, office chairs need to provide a high level of support and comfort. A comfortable office chair with proper support contributes to a more positive attitude, can increase productivity and even prevent injury.

Ideally, you want to find a chair that's just right for you. How do you choose? We've put together some information we believe will help.

## **The Right Chair Fits You**

Having a chair that fits you means the seat, back and arms are aligned with your body's dimensions.

### **Seat**

The chair seat should be approximately 18 inches wide and 15 to 17 inches deep. You want about an inch of space on either side for your thighs to fit comfortably without touching the armrest bases. Ideally, you should be able to sit against the backrest with your thighs horizontal to the floor and your feet flat on the floor and still have approximately 2-4 inches between the back of your knees and the edge of the seat.

### **Back**

Look for a backrest that's height adjustable and curved to match the natural curve of the spine.

Ergonomically speaking, a backrest should be 12" to 19" wide. Some chairs offer a seat back that tilts forward and backward, which is good for stretching and reclining.

Office chairs are generally classified as High Back, Mid-Back and Low Back. Here's the breakdown:

**[High Back \(27-33"\)](#)**

The seat back usually extends to the upper back or higher to support both the neck and head.

**[Mid Back \(17-26"\)](#)**

Seat back height provides support to the mid-to-upper back region.

**[Low Back \(10-16"\)](#)**

Task chairs are designed with a low back height to support the lower-to-mid back region.

**Arms**

Armrests should allow unconstrained movement of your hands and wrists, while supporting your elbows and lower arms. Your arms should not be positioned too low, too high or too far apart.

Office chairs are available with or without arm rests. There are advantages to both options. [Chairs with arm rests](#) support your body and reduce strain on your shoulders and neck. [Chairs without arm rests](#) easily slide under desks and tables. They usually cost a little less than models with arm rests. [Flip-up armrests](#) give you the advantage of having armrests when you want them and flipping them up and out of the way when you don't.

Most office chairs are designed for people who weigh 250 pounds or less. Larger/taller people who need extra room and increased support should look at our [Big and Tall chairs](#). These chairs offer weight capacities of up to 500 pounds, broader seat widths, and depths as well as back heights that can accommodate people up to seven feet tall.

Once you find the right size chair, determine if it can be adjusted to your exact specifications.

## The Right Chair is Adjustable

From a practical perspective, chairs are produced in standard sizes to fit the majority of people. Most feature a supportive back and arm rests. Look for a chair that's easy to adjust while you're sitting in it to give you a custom fit.

Here's a list of common adjustment options available on most office chairs:

<b>Seat Height</b>	Paddle or lever, located under the seat cushion that raises and lowers the seat
<b>Seat Depth</b>	Knob or lever at the back of the seat that allows the seat back or chair seat to slide backward and forward
<b>Back Height</b>	Knob or ratchet on the backrest stem or frame that allows the seat back to be raised and lowered
<b>Arm Height</b>	Lever under the armrest to raise and lower the armrest
<b>Arm Width</b>	Button on the inside of the armrest to slide the armrest from side to side
<b>Tilt Tension</b>	Knob that allows you to increase or decrease the amount of force needed to make the chair rock or recline backward
<b>Tilt-Lock</b>	Paddle or lever, located under the seat cushion, that locks the seat to prevent forward or backward tilting of the seat back

We've covered size and adjustability, now let's talk comfort. The primary factors that affect your level of comfort are the chair's ergonomic design, its padding and mobility.

## The Right Chair is Comfortable

A comfortable office chair can increase your productivity and maximize your efficiency. An uncomfortable chair can lead to back strain, leg problems and carpal tunnel syndrome.



### Ergonomics

An [ergonomic chair](#) is designed to maintain proper body alignment, keep you comfortable and prevent injury. The chair's padding, base and casters all affect your comfort. Start with the right size chair that you can adjust to your body's dimensions for optimal support.



### Padding

You want a chair that's not too hard or too soft. Chairs that are too soft can cause back muscle strain and fatigue. Look for padded edges on all sides and a front seat edge that is very soft and slopes slightly downward to help relieve pressure on the back of the thighs in what OSHA calls a "[waterfall](#)" design.



### Base

When looking at the base of the chair, consider a chair with a five-star configuration to prevent it from tipping when you lean back. An extra-wide base can also provide increased stability. Nylon and plastic bases are the most common. Aluminum and chrome bases are stronger than nylon but are still lightweight. Office chairs with a gold or wooden base add a distinctive, decorative touch.



### Casters

Casters or wheels on the chair's base are highly recommended when you need mobility at your desk or workstation. If a chair will be moved frequently into another office space or conference room, having wheels on your chair is an absolute necessity. Most office chairs that roll use dual wheel casters made from hard or soft polyurethane. You'll want hard wheel or oversized casters for carpeted floors and soft wheel or

rubber casters for hard floors (wood, tile, linoleum).



### **Chairmat**

A chair mat can transform your carpeted floor into a hard surface that allows your chair to roll easily. Chair mats can also be used to protect wood floors. They easily coordinate with your office décor in [clear vinyl or plastic](#) and [colored polycarbonate](#), in several different shapes to accommodate the space. Most feature either a studded back to grip carpets or felt backing with non-slip gripper dots for hard floor surfaces to keep the mat in place. A beveled edge makes rolling on and off the mat smooth.

### **The Right Chair Matches Your Lifestyle and Décor**

When choosing fabric for your office chair, factors to consider include airflow, durability and maintenance. While mesh and fabrics like wool allow air to circulate, they can be stained or damaged more easily and can be harder to clean. Vinyl, leather and microfiber are easier to keep clean and don't tear as easily, but have minimal air circulation and tend to hold more body heat.

Here's an overview of the most popular upholstery materials for office chairs:



### **Mesh**

[Mesh](#) is a loosely woven fabric with a large number of closely spaced holes that allow maximum airflow to keep you cool.



### **Microfiber**

[Microfiber](#) is a soft comfortable fabric made from polyester, nylon or a blend of both. It is durable and easy to clean, but not as breathable as mesh.



### **Vinyl**

[Vinyl](#) is an affordable fabric that can look and feel like leather, but is not as durable. It is very easy to clean but does not allow airflow.



### **Leather**

[Leather](#) is created by tanning animal rawhide and skin. Probably the most popular and sought-after upholstery material, it is durable and stylish and looks even better with age. It is, however, not breathable and requires regular cleaning and conditioning to maintain its attractive appearance.

Now it's just a matter of finding the color and style to match your work space!

### **The Right Chair Makes a Statement**

In many ways, your chair is a reflection of you. You want a chair that complements you. It should be appropriate for your position and suitable for day to day activities. So...what does your chair say about you?



### **Executive Office Chairs say, "You have arrived!"**

Stylish and often characterized by their larger build; [executive office chairs](#) have more adjustable features, extra padding and higher backs. These chairs are not made for mobility and multi-tasking. They're designed for planning, strategizing and managing people who multi-task.



### **Task Chairs say, "You're a multi-tasking machine!"**

Task chairs are designed with a shorter back height, height adjustable swivel seat and casters for mobility in your work area. Since they are generally not as formal in appearance as a high-back or executive chair, the low-back [task chair](#) can be easily transitioned from the receptionist's desk to the training room.



### **Side Chairs say, "Make yourself comfortable. We'll be right with you!"**

Side chairs come in a wide variety of styles and colors to fit in wherever they may be needed. Executive side chairs feature high backs, leather upholstery and plush padding while [side chairs](#) used in the breakroom might have a low back with a plastic seat and back. Side chairs do not generally have caster wheels.



### Personalized Chairs say whatever you want them to say!

- "We appreciate your business." Welcome your best clients to the table with chairs emblazoned with their company logo.
- "Congratulations!" Celebrate a friend or family member's business venture with chairs embroidered with the enterprise's name.
- "Great Job!" Recognize excellent performance with an Employee of the Month chair.

Our skilled designers can turn your vision into reality using vinyl applique or high-tech embroidery machines that weave up to 16 thread colors at a time. Choose a design from our Digital Library (20,000+ Images) or submit your own custom design. The possibilities are endless!

Comfortable office chairs with proper support contribute to improved employee morale, increased productivity and decreased injuries. Begin with the right size chair that can adjust to your body's dimensions. Look for ergonomic design, ample padding and fluid mobility. Choose upholstery that matches your décor and your lifestyle.

Whether you're shopping for your home office or corporate headquarters, you need to stay within your budget. BizChair.com carries an extensive inventory of [Office Chairs](#), as well as [Folding Chairs](#), [Stacking Chairs](#) and [Office Furniture](#) at affordable prices.

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If you have a specific question or need more information, call one of our knowledgeable customer service representatives at 800.924.2472. To visit our showroom, please call for an appointment.