

To Sit or Not to Sit? That is the Question Webinar FAQs

1. What are your thoughts on exercise ball type chairs?

The key words here are 'exercise ball'. Exercise balls were designed to exercise on; they were not designed to sit on. They are a great tool to develop strength. However, they are not designed to be in the office. In fact, I can tell you that for people with low back problems, using the exercise ball could actually make it worse. The University of Waterloo has done a study on this, so you can email me for a copy of this paper. When I injured my back years ago, I could only sit on the exercise ball for a maximum of two minutes at a time and I only did my exercises on it; that is what exercise balls are for. They do not height adjust, they move, and they could put you at risk of falling off. They could also cause your abdominal muscles to flare up more, make you more fatigue and create more problems for you.

2. What type of chairs would you recommend to employers that promote proper sitting?

The idea is to have a chair that has enough features. However, there is no one-size fits all chair even if the chair has many features. If you have taller or larger workers, you might need larger chairs. On the other hand, the more adjustable the chairs are, the more people you will be able to accommodate in your office. Look out for chairs with features such as a seat pane slider and an arm rest that not only goes up and down, but also goes in and out from the top. Also, look at the quality of the chair. You can get a chair with some features but if the chair does not have good quality and warranty, then it will not last. You can email me and I will recommend different types of chairs.

Also, there are many different seating companies that provide good seating. Prices for good seating chairs have come down significantly because of supply and demand. There is much more demand for good seating now than years ago, so there are more companies providing these options at a better price.

3. Do chiropractic and massage treatments assist with neck and back issues as a result of poor posture?

It depends as everyone has different conditions, so find out what works for you. For some its massage, whereas for others its chiropractic treatment. First and foremost, I think it is critical to know what is contributing to your problem. Treatment is good but it is not going to address the root cause. Our goal is to be pro-active such as educating people about it, but if you have a back condition, then this becomes even more critical. There are different treatments and methods available, so again, it depends on each individual and what the problem is.

4. What can under resourced companies do to promote proper sitting outside of buying ergonomic chairs?

If you are sitting all day long, there is no other option aside from getting a good chair. I think employers have a duty to provide the equipment that is necessary for the workers and a chair is a piece of equipment.

If you work in an office, employers have the duty to provide the proper equipment. For example, if you work in a manufacturing plant, your employer has to provide you with a tool that is safe for you to work with and to do the job. I think employers have to plan and budget, so you have to think about these things. If there are any employers looking to purchase new seating, our services are free. We can give you guidelines and features to look out for when buying chairs, so do the research before buying something. If anything is ergonomic, there are no guidelines around that, so I suggest that you consult with someone before you actually spend the money.

5. What's the most common misconception about sitting?

The most important thing about sitting is to recognize that we were *not* designed to sit all day but this is what many of us are doing. Sitting has 'risk' associated with it, so people need to recognize this; having said that, sitting will *not* kill you. For those of us who have 'sedentary' jobs, we have to change our behaviour and try to MOVE as much as we can and incorporate more physical activity into our day.