

Hello Everyone,

I must apologize for the delay in getting this newsletter out. I have been busy setting up my webpage and also trying to expand my services. I have applied to Alta Regional Center to become vendorized and also the Department of Veterans Affairs in Reno, Nevada. I will also hopefully soon be able to take credit card payments, if that can make life easier.

First of all I would like you all to sit back in your chairs and relax while you read the email. I have noticed that too often people lean forward in their chairs to work and this can place strain on your lower back. You should be able to lean back and let the chair do the work.

I was asked to write an article regarding the cost of ergonomic chairs. I also want you to sit back in the chair so when you see the cost of the chairs you do not fall out of your chairs (safety). I try as much as possible to recommend what is most appropriate and will enable the person to complete their tasks at the lowest cost. This may not always be the lowest cost item but rather the best value. I have discovered that getting the lowest price item often ends up costing more money in the long run. I know that when some counselors see the cost of an ergonomic chair and they are surprised. A good ergonomic chair costs can range from about \$400.00-\$800.00. I am sure we all see the ad's from Office Depot or Staples for chairs advertised for \$100.00-\$150.00 (even less if you have a coupon) and wonder why these chairs will not work for your clients. What is the difference between these chairs?

Many factors go into trying to pick out the appropriate chair for an individual. Some of these factors are:

1. the type of back issue they may have
2. the location the problem (low back, neck etc.)
3. the person's size and weight
4. the length of time they be sitting in the chair
5. the length of time they need to use the chair (sometimes a person may be enrolled in a short term training program).

People who have experienced a lot of back pain generally need a chair that can fit them very precisely or even one that can easily adjust from day to day. They may need to vary the position or amount of lumbar support from one day to the next depending on how they feel. People who have neck issues often find that having a high back chair where they can rest their head, if only for a minute or two, can provide a great deal of relief and enable them to work for much longer periods of time. Most chairs are rated to about 250 pounds. If someone is heavier than that they will need a sturdier chair which will cost more. I always try to find out how much of each person's day is spent at certain tasks and thereby can determine how much time they spend sitting. I find most people sit for a majority of their day.

One thing that I have discovered from numerous ergonomic assessments for people with back problems is that when they finally sit in a chair that fits them properly you can see them relax and the strain is greatly reduced. I would imagine in almost every office there is someone who has had a back issue and has a good ergonomic chair. I suggest you talk to them about the relief they felt when they finally got a good ergonomic chair and proper set up. There have been a number of studies that have shown that getting a proper ergonomic chair and set up can increase a person's productivity, reduce time off from work, and make them much happier (I made that one up just to see if you were paying attention, still lean back). If an ergonomic chair/set up can even reduce a day off from work now and again it can easily pay for itself.

If a person does not have a back issue but must work from home or is a student and is using a wooden kitchen type chair, I might recommend that the counselor consider a basic ergonomic chair such as one of the less expensive chairs from Office Depot or Staples. One thing nice about a good ergonomic chair is that it has a lot of adjustability where the back can be raised and lowered and moved in and out as well. The arms can be adjusted in height and width and also the chair can recline if the user needs it to. Some people do not like to recline in the chair and it is nice to be able to turn the feature off if needed. I like the concept of enabling a person to recline in a good ergonomic chair because this allows them to change positions if only for a minute or two which can provide enough relief to enable them to continue working. Is everyone still sitting back in their

chairs? The analogy I would give would be that people in power wheelchairs often must recline for pressure relief; the same is true for someone not in the power wheelchair. When sitting in one place for too long we get sore so we shift our weight to relieve the pressure. Having a chair that can recline helps us to shift our weight easily and still remain working. I have also looked at PIA chair (Prison Industry Authority) chairs. Actually, they carry some decent ergonomic chairs but they do not loan them to me so I can try them with people. They are about the same costs of the chairs I use for evaluations and I think these ones are better made and have more features.

Here are some of the major differences I see between a good ergonomic chair and a less expensive one:

1. Quality of the product. Many have casters that are cheaper and the cylinders do not last as long. I have seen a number of chairs that the cylinders no longer work and the chair just sinks when you sit in it.
2. They often have cheaper foam that breaks down sooner and can bottom out making it very uncomfortable to sit in.
3. They usually do not have all the adjustability of a good chair. They may or may not recline and they sometimes have one paddle that adjusts the back and seat angle at the same time. This can be hard for the user to get adjusted.

Please feel free to share this with others. If you want to be dropped of this list please let me know, I will not be offended.

Thanks,

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