



Office Chairs: A home buyers guide

Everything you need to know
before purchasing a chair for
your home office





Why the right chair is important

When it comes to creating a home workspace, finding a chair that suits your needs is one of the most important tasks you have to complete. Depending on how many hours you will be spend working from home, the right chair for you will not only need to be comfortable, but should also provide a level of support, flexibility and durability to meet your requirements.

With so much choice out there, it can be a little overwhelming to figure out which chair is the right chair for you. The world of office chairs (also known as task chairs) can be more complicated than you think, with a wide range of specialist features, attachments, materials and certifications that may sound impressive, but not always necessary for your individual needs.

In this guide we will take you through all the various features available on office chairs, explain their meanings, and ultimately help you work out for yourself which chair is the right chair for you.

At Flokk we understand that having the right chair when you work will not only keep you healthy, but will be the platform to help improve your overall wellbeing and productivity.

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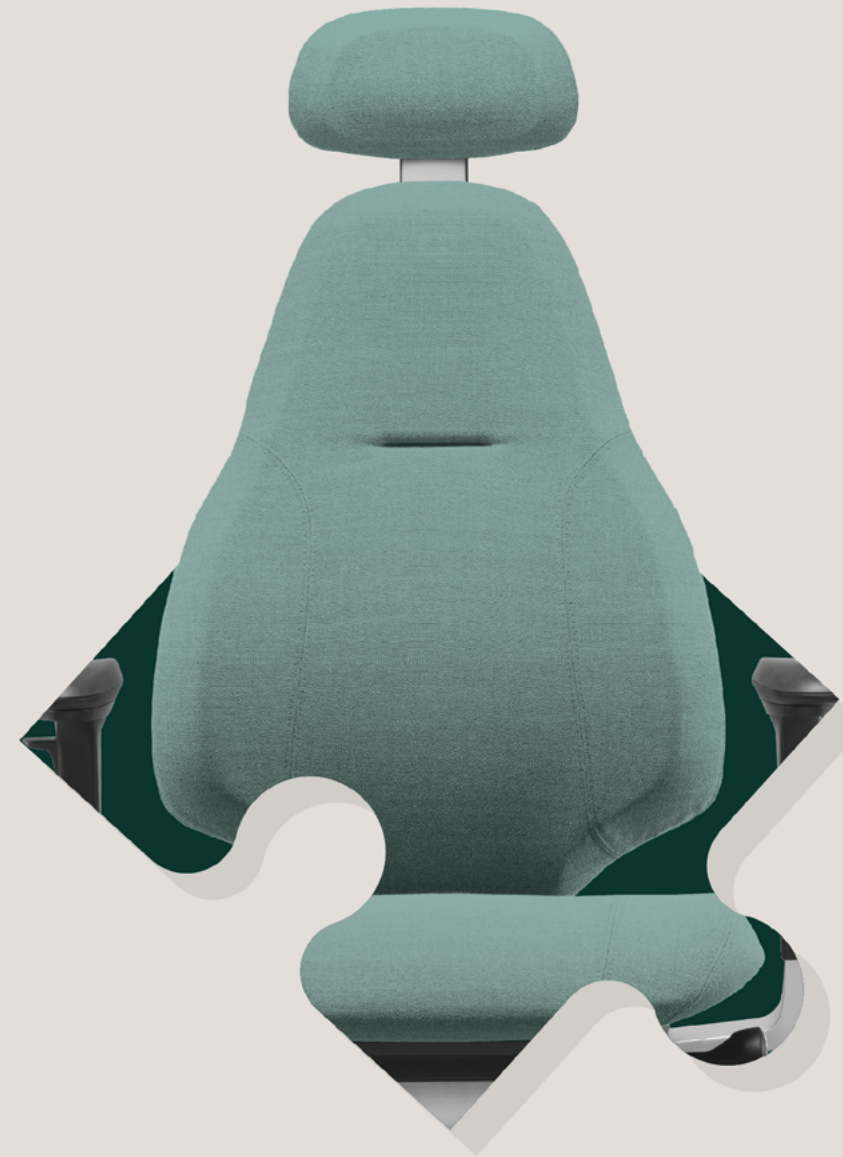
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Before you start...

As we mentioned already not every chair is the right chair for you. To help you narrow down your options there are a few things you first need to consider.

Evaluate your workspace



The most important thing to do first is to really evaluate your workspace. How much room you have for your chair is a major consideration. Task chairs come in all sizes, - from the sleek and slender to the large and bulky - so its important to find one that can fit into your space.

A second serious consideration is what you will be pairing it with. If you already have a desk, measure the desk height. When browsing for chairs have this height at hand so you can compare it to the lower height measurements of the various components of chairs. This will not be as important if you have a height adjustable desk, but if you don't then you will want your chair to go low enough to fit neatly under the desk at the end of the day.

Another factor is the flooring you have - this will dictate the type of castor (chair wheels) you need. Many chairs provide you the option to choose, but if not, it is important to ensure the castors are suitable for your flooring.

Finally, you want your chair to look good in your home workspace, so have a good think about the colours and materials that you want. High quality office seating provides you the options to pick from a wide selection of colours, especially with upholstery, as well as being available in a range of materials to match your interior aesthetics. Office furniture has come a long way in the past few decades, and now more than ever there are options to truly blend into home interior environments.

How will it be used?



After evaluating the space, it's time to think about exactly how your chair will be used. Working from home for 40+ hours a week will require a chair that provides a lot more support than if you are only working a few hours a week remotely. Not every chair is designed for such extensive usage, so it is important to bear that in mind.

Another consideration is how many people intend to use the chair. Some task chairs can be adjusted to fit the exact needs of the user, making it a chore to adjust every time somebody else uses it. This may be exactly what you are looking for if you will be the only user. However, if your workspace also doubles up a family computer zone, or you plan to share your home office with other housemates, you should perhaps consider a chair that is more easily adapted to fit work with multiple users.

What is my budget?



As with every purchase, budget is often a critical factor when making a decision. Office chairs range in price from under £100 up to £2000, depending on the quality of build, choice of materials, features and customisation. Whilst lower end chairs may be tempting, they often lack in important ergonomic features, meaning that they will not provide the required amount of comfort and support for the lengthy hours you spend at work. If you think of your chair as another tool you need to work effectively (much like your computer, or your mobile phone) you can begin to quantify its value more appropriately. Often more premium quality products also come with long warranty periods, meaning that they can be repaired and serviced at no charge for many years.



Checklist:

- ✓ Evaluate size of workspace
- ✓ Measure desk height
- ✓ Check floor type
- ✓ Consider colour choices
- ✓ Assess time spent in workspace
- ✓ Count number of users

Understanding your chair

The Seat itself



To the untrained eye, the seat of one task chair is not much different to another, and apart from slightly different designs, they all perform the same function. This simply isn't the case, and when you start to look at high quality task chairs there is much more going on.

A common feature to look out for is the waterfall edge. This is where the front edge of a seat is slightly curved downward. This design feature relieves pressure on the backs of your thighs and behind your knees, increasing comfort and support, allowing greater blood circulation to the lower limbs. This is especially important when it comes to extended sitting hours.

Chairs which feature padding are generally more comfortable for longer periods of time compared to those without, although ergonomic shaping of chair seats do make hard materials such as wood or plastic surprisingly comfortable. If in doubt, it's always good to arrange a visit to a showroom to try out a few chairs to get a feel for them. Some chair designs allow you to choose a size, and in these instances, it is usually down the size of the user. Specifications should give you an indication of the size.

There are alternative seat designs which offer a different seated experience altogether. A great example of this is the >HÅG Capisco, design featuring a saddle seat. In combination with footrests, and a slim backrest, this seat gives your body a great range of movement and promotes regular postural change and activity, which helps to beat the effects of sedentary behaviour.

The Seat Back



The back of your chair is what provides most of the support. They come in all shapes, sizes and materials, which as well as providing different cosmetic appeal are also suitable for different environments and individual needs.

The height of a backrest can scale appropriately to the height on an individual – i.e. taller for tall people, shorter for short people. However, there is more to it than that. Taller backrests provide more overall support and are suitable for longer periods of sitting. Shorter backrests are not so comfortable for relaxing over longer periods of time but they do brace the lower back. This helps you maintain a healthy posture whilst giving your upper body a much wider range of movement.

The materials you choose are also not just aesthetic. Hard materials such as wood and plastic may come in an ergonomic and comfortable shape, but are perhaps less suitable for lengthy work days without additional padding. Upholstery can be soft and comfortable, but more prone to damage from spillages. As well as this, upholstery can also provide more warmth, whilst plastic or wooden seat backs are often preferred in warmer or humid climates. It's important to consider the environment and how you will be using the chair when making this selection.



Key points:

- Higher seat backs for taller people & prolonged (4+ hours) sitting
- Lower seat backs for shorter people & shorter periods of sitting
- Waterfall seat edges promote better comfort and blood circulation
- Padding helps for comfort & warmth
- Harder materials, whilst surprisingly comfortable
- usually preferred for shorter periods of sitting and warmer climates
- Some upholstery can be harder to keep clean, consider how messy your environment is
- If in doubt, visit a showroom to try them out
- Not all sitting is the same, explore alternative seat styles to find the right match for your preferences

Understanding your chair

Lumbar Support



There is a natural tendency to slouch or lean forward when seated for a long time. This can put strain on your muscles, ultimately causing back pain. Lumbar support is there to provide additional support to the ‘lumbar’ region of your lower back, keeping your back in a healthy posture and reducing the risk of back pain.

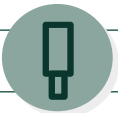
When seated, good lumbar support should be right up against the small of your back, helping you to maintain the inward curve of your lower spine, giving you a healthy posture. Lumbar support comes in a variety of types, offering basic to excellent ergonomic qualities.

> [You can read more about some of the options here](#)

Do I need it on my chair?

Lumbar support can be a hugely beneficial element of seating, especially if you have a tendency to work long hours. Whilst ultimately frequent movement and postural changes are the best form of practice to minimise strain on your body, especially your lower back, if you have difficulty in self-regulating postural changes and intend to spend long hours seated, you should definitely consider a chair with a lumbar support to help prevent long-term health issues. Of all the types of supports available, adjustable lumbar support will most likely provide the greatest benefits.

Gas Stem



Most task chairs are equipped with a mechanism which allows you to raise and lower the seat high. This is what is known as a gas lift, or gas stem (due to being powered by a pressurised gas cylinder). Whilst these allow a range of heights, these come in several sizes, offering alternative lowest and highest seat heights.

Taller gas lifts are more suitable for higher desks or to be combined with sit/stand desks, whilst lower options are available for particularly short people or lower desk heights.

If you are unsure which height is suitable for you, you can check the seat height specifications with a particular chair, or contact the manufacturer for assistance.



Key points:

- Lumbar support can be hugely beneficial when it comes to maintaining healthy sitting posture, especially for lengthy periods
- Always consider lumbar support if you have existing back health issues
- Different types of lumbar support is available, but adjustable is always better to ensure a better fit
- Gas stems allow for height variation of the chair
- Available in different sizes - higher gas stems most suitable for height adjustable desks
- Check specifications against desk height to determine what size suits you

Understanding your chair

Armrests



Armrests provide a place for you to rest your forearms (or elbows!), helping to relieve any strain placed on your wrists and shoulders whilst performing tasks such as typing or writing. Whilst not every chair will have armrests, for prolonged periods of sitting, such as a full working day, it is generally advised to use a chair which has armrests to avoid injury or strain.

Adjustable options

More premium chairs coming with adjustable armrests, offering both height and depth change. Having height adjustable armrests allows a chair to be perfectly matched to both user and work surface heights. This can be especially useful if you have a height adjustable table, or plan on using the chair at multiple worksurfaces.

Depth adjustment (being able to slide forward and backward) is also handy if you have a tendency to shift closer or further away from your desks at times. Equally, having the ability to completely slide your armrests back allows you to use the chair for tasks requiring more space or greater freedom of movement.

Different materials

Once again, how often you use a chair and what environment it will be placed in can determine which material you would like for your armrest. Padded armrests are perfect for extended usage, with leather seen as the most luxurious option, but you may want to consider synthetic materials if you plan on putting your chair through regular day-to-day usage.

Headrests/neckrests



Headrests are often available as an extra for office chairs, providing an additional level of comfort and support when seated. Much like armrests, headrests are intended to be used intermittently, providing relief for your neck and shoulder muscles (hence why they are often referred to as neckrests) during periods of rest as opposed to providing constant support whilst seated.

Do I need one?

Whilst anyone can benefit from having a chair with a headrest, they are not a vital component of a chair for everyone. Individuals who suffer from acute neck or back pain will often find a much greater benefit from using a chair with a headrest, as well as those with problems with their posture. This is because encourage a more upright and healthier sitting position alongside the extra support.

What to look out for

Once again adjustability is vital as it ensures the headrest can be put in the correct position to support your individual needs. This means both height and position. If aesthetics is important, look out for models which offer the ability to colour match headrests with the materials you have chosen on your chair. Some lesser quality chair models have standardised headrests which are not colour compatible with all configurations.

Alternatives

The HÅG Capisco is one of our most popular designs for the home office, yet it does not come with conventional armrests. The iconic shaped back offers the perfect place to rest your arms when not typing/writing/tasking, whilst simultaneously allowing unrivalled freedom of movement not just for your arms, but your entire upper body, thanks to its open shape.



> Click here to find out more about the HÅG Capisco design.

Key points:

- Armrests (support elbows, wrists and shoulders)
- Recommended for extended periods of sitting and working
 - Height adjustment is crucial to offer correct level of support (adjusting chair height can help here)
 - Additional adjustments (depth, shape, width) increase comfort and performance

- Headrests
- Not always included, not as important as armrests
 - Generally intended to be used intermittently, when resting
 - Advised for those with health conditions
 - Adjustable almost always provides better performance
 - Many different types available, trying them out is great to find your preference

Understanding your chair

Castors



Most office chairs have wheels on them, known as castors. Soft castors prevent the chair from rolling out from underneath you as well as marring the floor, and are suitable for harder floors. Hard castors casters, which are a plastic mat, are better suited to carpets and softer flooring.

Make sure to choose the correct castors for your environment when purchasing your chair. At Flokk all of our chairs have interchangeable castors, so if you do decide you need different castors in the future, you are able to order new ones and easily clip them in place yourself.

Alternatives

Glides offer an alternative to wheels, holding your chair in place if required. Infrequently used on office chairs, they are preferred by a select few with very specific needs.

Accessories



Footring

A footring is a popular accessory when combined with a higher gas stem, providing a handy place to rest your feet when the seat is raised higher than floor level. At Flokk these are easily added and removed without the need of tools, so can be used intermittently when required.

Lumbar Pump

An inflatable lumbar support operated by a pump which can adjust both the depth and firmness of the support. An added extra if you require extra sensitivity to your lumbar support.



Thinking sustainably

From the food we eat to the way we travel, we are all becoming more conscious of our effect on the environment and how we can play our part – the way we buy furniture should be no different. Good quality home office chairs should not only be comfortable, but made to last and with as minimal impact on the environment as possible – but how can you tell which furniture is made sustainably, and which isn't?

Built to last

Due to the large increase of people working from home, many companies are looking to cash in on the market, producing cheap and attractive furniture made from low-quality materials and with no guarantees on lifespan. This trend, known as Fast Furniture, has directly led to a massive increase in furniture being tossed in to landfill (the US EPA registering 12 million tons of furniture in municipal waste in 2018, almost 5% of the total.) When purchasing your chair look out for one with a lengthy guarantee as well as one designed for disassembly, which will allow you to replace broken or worn parts effortlessly.

> Recycled materials

Steel is the most recycled material on the planet, more than all other materials combined. In 2012 the global recycling rate stood at 88%. With plastics, the difference couldn't be more startling. Research published in 2017 suggested 91% of plastic created hasn't been recycled.

Therefore, it's not simply enough for furniture to be recyclable, but to be made out of recycled materials too. These facts should be easy to find out when you are looking at prospective furniture. A little bit of research may lead to some interesting results. Materials such aluminium and steel make just as good products the second (or 100th!) time around as the first.

Avoiding toxic chemicals

Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are chemicals that evaporate at room temperature. That new furniture smell when you peel off the plastic wrapper? VOC gases. Some occur naturally and some are synthetic and can be dangerous to human health as well as harming the environment. To avoid furniture with VOCs look out for reputable labelling such as >[GREENGUARD certified](#) products. This is an assurance that products meet

a strict chemical emission limit, backing sustainability claims with empirical scientific data from a third-party organisation.

Environmental labelling

GREENGUARD is just one of many environmental certifications available with furniture, each offering different levels of environmental assurances. Many countries carry their own standards, such as Nordic Swan Ecolabel or the German Blue Angel, but make sure you do your research to check out that they are strict and unbiased, and not simply an example of >„greenwashing“.

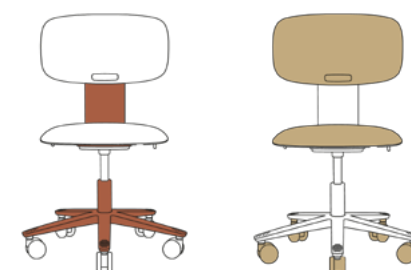
EPDs

The most accurate way to determine a piece of furniture's impact on the environment is with an Environmental Product Declaration (EPD). An EPD is an independently verified and registered document that communicates transparent and comparable information about the life-cycle environmental impact of products. It calculates the complete impact on the environment, from the extraction of raw materials to factory gate out.

Having an EPD does not necessarily mean that a product is environmentally friendly, but it gives you a clear indication of the total impact the product has, and you can compare product EPD's to see the difference between manufacturers.

In 2004, Flokk brand HÅG became the first furniture manufacturer to apply for an EPD, acknowledging that HÅG have some of the lowest CO₂ emissions in the furniture industry, and now all Flokk brands are working to document their product ranges with EPD to provide a transparent view on our manufacturing process.

> [Click here to read more about EPDs](#)



Recycled aluminium

Equivalent to 475
soda cans



GREENGUARD
certificate



Recycled plastic

Equivalent to 53
shampoo bottles



Environmental
Product Declaration



Featured: HÅG Tion

Our top home office chairs

Please click on the picture of any chair and check all available configurations.



HÅG Tion



HÅG Capisco



HÅG Capisco Puls



giroflex 313



RH Mereo



giroflex 353



HÅG SoFi



HÅG Futu



giroflex 40



RH Activ



HÅG Creed



RBM Noor Footbase



Profim Trillo^{Pro}



giroflex 545



Flokk is the leading manufacturer of high-quality workplace furniture in Europe, developing a growing family of brands.

We take on a human-centered, deep design thinking approach, while always keeping a long-term perspective. All our products are designed and manufactured with a minimum environmental impact in mind, maintaining a high life-time value. For this work we are both awarded and certified.

Designing for well-being and performance, we aim to inspire the great work of our customers, across the globe.

