
Is a Kneeling Chair right for you?

Are kneeling chairs suitable for any type of office?

Most Kneeling chairs are ideal for office use, with swivel bases and height adjustable gas cylinders to meet the parameters of most workstations, as well as the added advantage of being able to roll under the desk when not in use, helping keep work areas uncluttered.

I've had knee surgery recently and am concerned that it may cause me pain.

Despite the name, the posture of a person in a kneeling chair is not the same as kneeling on the ground. It is sometimes assumed that the knees bear most of the body's weight when sitting in a kneeling chair, but this is incorrect - the shins bear some weight for stability, but the body is still sitting, not kneeling. There should be no pressure on the knees at all.

Will the kneeling chair roll away from my desk if my feet aren't on the floor?

Not normally, but please bear in mind that it may happen on hard floors or office mats.

Will I be comfortable sitting on a kneeling chair all day?

For many people, the sitting position involves the adoption of 'new' movements. Muscles that have not been very active are put to use; and therefore you may feel a bit stiff in the beginning. **Some people need an adaptation period (1 to 2 weeks), not only for the muscles, but also regarding use of the chair itself.** The whole concept of the 'inclined seat' and knee cushion renders sitting and rising different from traditional chairs. No one should remain in the same posture the entire day, no matter what kind of chair is being used.

We need variation and kneeling chairs allow many different variations in posture. You can sit with both legs supported on the knee cushion, or with only one leg supported and the other stretch out. You can regulate the pressure on the shins by moving up or down on the seat, etc. **NOTE:** When sitting on a kneeling chair you are still supposed to sit (not rest on your knees). The cushion is there only to provide support for the shins. Always sit first, and then place both knees on the cushion.

Initially, back muscles may become tired as they adjust to the new posture and absence of a back rest. As such, we recommend gradually building up the time spent in the kneeling chair.

I am 5 months into my pregnancy and starting to feel some lower back pain. Can a kneeling chair help?

A kneeling chair can be a wonderful help during pregnancy, particularly in the latter stages as less pressure is placed on the womb when the angle between the trunk and thighs is increased.

What do health professionals and ergonomists think of kneeling chairs?

Chiropractors often quote the fact that office workers with desk jobs will suffer more lower back pain than most other people in the population, and that the best chairs to sit on are those with a forward seat tilt. Some health providers also recommend posture knee chairs for people with certain injuries or even diseases of the backbone or knees, due to the extra benefit and lumbar support this positioning provides.

Ergonomists worldwide have seen first-hand how effective the kneeling chair is in promoting good posture and back health, and promote the benefits of the kneeling chair into both office and home environments.

What is the difference between a traditional chair with a forward tilt and a kneeling chair?

The angle of tilt from the horizontal is greater on a kneeling chair than on a forward sloping chair, therefore transferring more upper body weight from lumbar area to the shins. The kneeling chair would allow you to sit without sliding because of the kneeler cushion. Both sitting positions improve the return blood flow from your lower legs.

Is the pressure on the knees going to be too much?

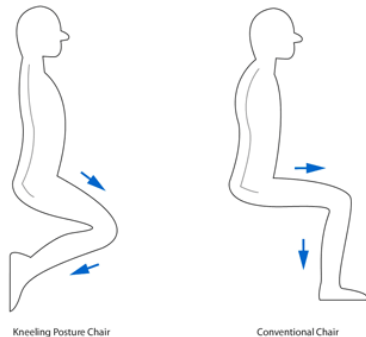
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Are kneeling chairs a new thing?

Kneeling chairs were invented in Norway in the 1970s, starting with Hans Christian Mengshoel's experiments on sitting devices with support under the shins.

Benefits of a Kneeling Chair

Spinal Alignment & Pain relief



Kneeling chairs position you with an open hip angle

The posture encouraged in a kneeling chair is different to traditional seating. By tilting the pelvis forward and lowering the knees in relation to the hips, the spine is encouraged to adopt the correct alignment, such as when standing. This means the weight and compressive forces of the upper body are distributed through the seat and the legs so the discs are not squeezed out of shape and muscle strain is not required to maintain upright. Compression on the discs of the lumbar spine is relieved by as much as 35% when seated in this kneeling-like posture. This positioning also allows improved blood flow to the discs, which may delay the process of disc degeneration¹.

Comfort

Despite the name, the knees do not bear the weight when sitting in a kneeling chair. Rather, the shins provide a second point of contact with the body's weight distributed between the spine, thighs and shins. This ensures that excessive compressive forces leading to pain do not occur in the spine or at any contact point. As a result the kneeling chair provides comfortable seating, whilst maintaining correct posture and alignment.

Kneeling chairs are also good for pregnant women, particularly in later stages of pregnancy, as less pressure is placed on the womb when the angle between the trunk and thighs is increased.

Improved posture

Poor posture is often developed from working environments that do not support proper spinal alignment, or do not fit the individual's needs. This leads to back pain, which further discourages good posture and makes the idea of sitting up straight unbearable to many. The kneeling chair combats this. The forward sloping seat allows the angle between the trunk and thighs to be increased to ensure proper spinal alignment with minimal pressure on discs. This greatly reduces back pain associated with sitting, and as such, correct posture may be maintained.

In addition, regularly practicing good posture while seated has been shown to improve standing posture as it trains the muscles of the back and abdomen to support the skeleton in the correct way².

Improved internal organs activity

Tilting the pelvis forward not only enables correct spinal alignment and posture when sitting, it also improves breathing, circulation and digestion. By re-positioning the shoulders and pulling the chest up and out, lung capacity is increased, and less pressure is put on the heart, so blood circulation is increased. The internal organs of the abdomen also experience less pressure when the spine is elongated and so help with digestion.

Released tension on muscles, joints and tendons

Proper spinal alignment and posture ensure the work load and body weight is distributed between parts of the musculo-skeletal system, to reduce compressive forces and pain at any one point. A kneeling chair reduces muscle tension and strain and therefore reduces the risk of injury while seated. The chances of suffering a 'disc prolapse' are also greatly reduced by a kneeling-like sitting position.

Ease of use

Kneeling chairs are designed with ease of use in mind. Set on castor wheels, these chairs can be maneuvered around the office space, and moved under most desks when not in use to minimize clutter. In addition, you can position yourself as close to the desk as needed without being restricted by arm rests.

Kneeling chairs come with different levels of adjustability, so each individual can find their optimum sitting position. Kneeling chairs are initially fixed at the optimum seating position, and then remain at this position, so there is no fiddling with multiple levers and knobs throughout the day. In addition, you don't have to lift your body out of the chair when getting up, as with conventional chairs. Just put your feet on the floor and walk out of the chair from a half-standing position.

Improved Concentration and Performance

Bad work postures lead to fatigue, loss of productivity, headache, aggravation of existing injuries and back problems. By improving posture, spinal alignment and maintaining comfort, kneeling chairs encourage continued concentration and performance throughout the day. Sitting with the hips higher than the knees can also increase freedom of movement and improve reach, such that less maneuvering with the chair may be required. In addition, visual distance and angle to the task on a workstation may be improved by this sitting position hence kneeling chairs are especially useful when seated in front of a desk or computer.

Increased core strength

Continued use of kneeling chairs increases muscle strength in the abdominals and back. These muscles are engaged subtly when sitting in a kneeling chair as there is no back rest to rely on. This is evident in third world countries where many people, who do not use chairs, have retained the ability to sit upright without back support. These internal muscles of the pelvis and torso cannot be effectively toned by gym workouts, but only by sitting autonomously.

Working environments

Kneeling chairs offer comfort and support for spinal alignment in a wide variety of settings. Although the use of kneeling chairs began with those suffering from back problems, today they are used by all kinds of people in all kinds of jobs and environments. Kneeling chairs are suitable for adults, teenagers and children both at home and in the office. They are perfect for pregnant women and those who suffer from back, hip, prostate, or other lower torso discomforts.

Suitability

- Easing into and out of the chair may be slightly more challenging for people with mobility problems.
- Initially, back muscles may become tired as they adjust to the new posture and absence of a back rest. As such, we recommend gradually building up the time spent in the kneeling chair.
- Kneeling chairs are not recommended for people with a history of poor circulation in the legs, or knee problems.

¹ Rohlmann, Loads on ad internal spinal fixation device during sitting 2001

² Koskelo, Vuorikari, Sitting and standing postures are correlated by..., Ergonomics, 50(10): 1643-1656
