

Beyond the Desk.

Exploring the Future of Workspaces

The Anatomy of a Chair: What to Look for in the Perfect Task Chair

The humble Task chair is anything but humble. Often overlooked, the right chair can make a world of difference to posture, focus, and overall wellbeing, especially for those spending long hours at a desk. But not all chairs are created equal. From ergonomics to aesthetics, here's a breakdown of what to consider when choosing the perfect task chair for your workspace.

Ergonomic Features: Comfort Meets Support

At the heart of any great task chair is its ergonomic design. A well-designed chair should support the body's natural posture and encourage movement throughout the day.

- **Adjustability** is key. Look for chairs that allow you to tweak the height, seat depth, backrest angle, armrests, and lumbar support. This ensures the chair can be tailored to different body types and preferences.
- **Lumbar support** is essential for maintaining the spine's natural curve and preventing lower back pain.
- **Seat depth and width** should allow for 2–4 cm of space between the seat edge and the back of the knees, enough to promote circulation without cutting off support.
- **Backrest design** should be contoured or flexible to encourage posture variation and movement.
- **Tilt mechanisms**, such as synchronous or dynamic tilt, promote active sitting and reduce fatigue over long periods.

Function and Use: Fit for Purpose

Not all chairs are used the same way, so it's important to match the chair's functionality to its intended use.

- **Duration of use** matters. Chairs designed for full-time use (6+ hours per day) should offer higher ergonomic performance than those used occasionally.
- **Type of work** also plays a role:
 - For focused work, prioritise ergonomic adjustability and support.
 - For collaborative or agile spaces, opt for lighter, mobile chairs that are easy to reposition.
- **Mobility** is another consideration. Choose between castors or glides depending on the flooring and whether the chair needs to move frequently.

Aesthetic and Design: Style That Works

In modern workspaces, a chair's appearance is almost as important as its function.

- **Form and style** should align with the overall design language of your office, whether that's corporate, creative, or minimalist.
- **Colour and finish options** should complement your interior palette, helping to create a cohesive and professional look.
- **Brand consistency** is especially important in client-facing areas or open-plan environments where visual harmony matters.



Materials and Upholstery: Built to Last

The materials used in a chair affect not only its comfort but also its durability and maintenance.

- **Breathability** is important, mesh backs allow airflow, while upholstered seats offer cushioned comfort.
- **Durability** should be measured by commercial-grade standards like the Martindale rub count.
- **Ease of cleaning** is crucial in shared or high-traffic environments.
- **Sustainability** is increasingly a priority, with many organisations opting for chairs made from recyclable materials or those with environmental certifications like GECA or AFRDI Green Tick.

Budget and Value: Invest Wisely

While budget is always a factor, it's important to consider the total cost of ownership, and are you comparing apples with apples?

- **Warranty** length is a good indicator of build quality, look for chairs with 5–10 year warranties.
- **Durability and replacement parts** can significantly affect long-term value.
- **Bulk pricing and customisation** options can offer cost savings and consistency for large-scale fitouts.

User and Organisational Needs: One Size Doesn't Fit All

A great chair should accommodate a diverse range of users and organisational requirements.

- **Body diversity** it's essential chairs should support a wide range of heights, weights, and body types.
- **User training** is often overlooked. Even the best ergonomic chair won't help if users don't know how to adjust it properly.
- **Compliance with WHS or ergonomic standards** may be required depending on your organisation's policies.

Environmental and Certification Standards: Choose Responsibly

Finally, look for chairs that meet recognised certifications for performance and sustainability, **BIFMA** and **AFRDI Level 6 or 7** ensures durability and ergonomic compliance for commercial use.

A task chair is more than just a seat, it's a tool for productivity, comfort, and wellbeing. By understanding the anatomy of a chair and what to look for, you can make an informed choice that supports both your budget, clients and design for years to come.