

Is your chair bad for your health?

Sitting with the correct posture is very important as it relieves the strain on the lower back.

When you sit in a conventional chair your spine assumes an unnatural position resulting in a flattening of the lumbar curve. Leaning forward to work displaces this curve even further, which stresses the discs and soft intra-discal tissue of the spine, and can cause serious and painful damage. A new revolutionary seat, the saddle seat allows the spine and pelvis to work together to create balance and mobility in the upright position and is thought to provide the ideal characteristics for promoting a healthy back and preventing back pain. Good posture happens naturally as you sit on the seat.

Although saddle seats have been around for a number of years, they tend to be used by business professionals such as dentists and musicians rather than for general back care. Several versions are available but one or two leave comfort and quality to be desired.

The bambach saddle seat was developed by an occupational therapist, as a result of working with disabled horse riders, claiming that the riding horse sit/stand position promotes the ideal posture because the hip joints rest in a relaxed position and the spine is in perfect balance.

BackCare's product panel tested the seat in several different occupational situations and found it to be extremely functional and superbly engineered to very high quality standards. It looks and feels just like a good quality horse saddle mounted on a superbly designed office chair

pedestal. You 'ride' it just as you would ride a horse.

The swivel base houses the central height adjustment gas piston which, when locked, allows a small amount of 'bounce' for added comfort. The base is fitted with easy-glide castors which allow you to 'scoot' around your work place with total ease.

The instructions are well written and describe the correct way to sit on the saddle. The upper thighs should be at 45° to the top of the body and feet resting on the floor so that you adopt the correct horse riding straddle.

The comfort zone

The saddle is very comfortable and has a curved rear lip which is higher than on standard horse saddles or other saddle seats. This feature tends to encourage a forward pelvic tilt which keeps the spine straight, encouraging the natural lumbar curve and discouraging sitting in the forward slump, on one buttock or fidgeting from side to side.

People with a posteriorly rotated pelvis who habitually slump in the classic 'C' would definitely benefit from this particular design feature.

In comparison with other saddle seats on the market, this seat is superior but weighs in at the top end of the price range (£399 +

VAT). However, in the panel's opinion, this should not be a restraint if you are considering buying a working chair. This is a top quality product, highly functional in the war against back pain and, with care should last many years.

It could be worth considering for general home use if you regularly sit for long periods in front of the computer, electronic keyboard etc, and if you need a really back friendly stool for your all night internet browsing, this may just be the answer. (For computer work you may need to raise the monitor and keyboard to reduce neck, shoulder and arm strain.)

The panel concluded that the Bambach saddle seat is well worth considering by anyone who has postural back pain and/or pelvic misalignment.

For a more detailed information sheet on saddle seats contact BackCare North Yorkshire 07903 208803 (24 hr answer phone) or email: backcarenorth@aol.com or visit www.care4backs.com

If you would like to discuss trying out the saddle seat contact bambach on 0800 581 108 or visit their web site at www.bambach.co.uk

