

Ergonomics and Your Bottom Line

Allsteel®

Your guide to a return on your investment (ROI) and ergonomics.

When it comes to office productivity and health, few decisions you make will be as critical as your purchase of seating and workstations. This educational guide can help you understand the costs and benefits of ergonomic furniture, choose the correct product options, and ensure you are using them correctly.



To Adjust or Not Adjust

The new furniture you purchase next could be fixed, non-adjustable furniture. Or you could opt for ergonomic seating, desks, or accessories that have more adjustability and customization for the individual. When purchasing furniture, your investment can be measured by looking at both direct and indirect costs. Direct costs can include the expense of the furniture and the real estate being used. Indirect costs or benefits of furniture may include the decrease or increase in worker productivity because of the furniture. It may also include the cost to train and compensate a replacement worker for one who was injured because of poor posture or furniture fit.

Benefits of adjustability

- **User-adjustable** furniture can enable desk sharing, telecommuting, multi-shift work, and better space utilization.
- **Adjustable** ergonomic furniture and user training result in an average **decrease of 80%** on cost per injury claim, and a decrease of 60% in the number of claims. (Washington State Department of Labor)

Costs of non-adjustability

- Continual high injury rates: each year a company averages 1 to 1.6 injuries per 100 full-time office workers. This results in an average cost of \$48,400 to \$77,475 per year.
- Continual high facilities labor costs for churn, restacks, and adjustments due to injuries.



Injuries and Costs

Furniture choices affect health, safety, and productivity, as well as occupancy and move-related costs.

Adjustable height furniture may decrease injuries because it can eliminate poor fit and awkward, uncomfortable postures.

Static postures associated with fixed-height furniture can contribute to decreased productivity, weight gain, diabetes, and other chronic illnesses. (Mayo Clinic/Duke University)

Some facts about injuries at work

- Back pain is second only to the common cold as a cause of work loss. (University of Missouri study)
- Repetitive motion injuries account for more than \$2 billion in workers' compensation costs annually. (Liberty Mutual Workplace Safety Index)
- **Non-adjustable** desks generated **twice** as many ergo issues and **higher** facilities and workers' compensation **costs** compared to user-adjustable ergonomic furniture. (Fortune 500 Financial Firm, internal study)

Total Cost of Ownership

Non-Ergonomic Worksurface vs. Ergonomic

Item	Cost per 100 Users	
	Non-Ergo Scenario	Ergo Scenario
Worksurface (Cost per 100 Employees)	\$30,000	\$100,000
Annual Injury Expense (1 Injury per 100 Employees)	\$48,400 Per Year	\$9,700 (80% Less)
Online Ergo Training (100 Employees)	–	\$2,000 Per Year
Total Costs (Year 1) (Ergo Desk + Injury Costs + Training)	\$78,400	\$111,700
Total Payback (Year 1) (Non-Ergo – Ergo)		(\$33,300)
Total Costs (Year 2) (Annual Injury Costs + Training)	\$48,400	\$11,700
Total Payback (Year 2) (Non-Ergo – Ergo + Year 1)		\$3,400

Assumptions

- Non-ergo = non-adjustable worksurface
- Ergo desk = adjustable ergonomic desk (\$700 more in cost per person than non-ergo)
- 1 ergo injury per year per 100 employees at \$48,400
- Ergo furniture and training reduce injury costs by 80%

The payback for the initial investment is 2 years, with sustained savings in subsequent years from fewer injuries and related expenses. Additionally, the benefits of increased productivity, user satisfaction, and lower absenteeism are not shown in this table but can further justify the benefits of purchasing ergonomic furniture. A similar analysis can be done for ergonomic vs. non-adjustable seating or accessories.

Ergonomics at Allsteel

Finding new ways to make offices more productive and people more comfortable is leading to great things at Allsteel. We're not only conducting intensive ergonomics research, we're also tracking the latest in workplace trends and helping companies understand how our innovative products facilitate a healthier, happier workforce.

For example, we pioneered chairs that move with you from sitting upright to reclined positions, while maintaining your line of sight to your monitor and expanding your torso for better circulation. Our ergonomics team also helped redefine systems furniture by placing storage within workstation walls at desk level, so there is no uncomfortable reaching above the shoulders and below the waist for frequently used items.

Whether it's the Stride™ height-adjustable worksurface bringing cost-effective ergonomics to the masses, or our seating portfolio that promotes healthy movement, we are constantly finding new ways to improve the office. To learn more about ergonomics within the workplace, visit allsteeloffice.com/ergo or email ergonomics@allsteeloffice.com.

Learning to Adjust Your New Investment

Ergonomics means fitting the job to the worker, because one size may not always fit all.

Ergonomic seating can provide user adjustability so that the seat, backrest, and armrests better accommodate the user.

Since fixed, non-adjustable worksurfaces or desks may not provide as much accommodation and customization as adjustable furniture, providing height-adjustable keyboard trays and/or appropriate ergonomic seating as options for adjustability can improve accommodation.

If using facilities-adjustable worksurfaces, adjust the height to suit the user. The worksurface should be near the resting elbow height.

User-adjustable worksurfaces within the *sit range* (24" to 32") can accommodate most users, and enables desk sharing for multiple shifts or telecommuters.

User-adjustable furniture within the *sit-to-stand range* (24" to 40") offers the best ergonomic benefits, and enables desk sharing for multiple shifts or telecommuters.

Basic ergonomics training and posture evaluation can also significantly improve user comfort and reduce injuries. For additional information, see our *Ergonomics Adjustment Brochure* at allsteeloffice.com/ergo.

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