

Ergonomics: Treadmill workstations, stability balls and other fads

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Treadmill Desks

Treadmill desks are not recommended for use in the work place. Current research indicates that the use of a treadmill desk results in:

- ▶ Reduction in worker productivity
 - ▶ Deterioration of typing ability
 - ▶ Reduction in manual dexterity
- ▶ Possible reduction of cognitive ability to perform work while walking
- ▶ Ineffective replacement for regular vigorous exercise
- ▶ Not a cost effective means to improve workplace wellness



Ball chairs

Exercise balls and ball chairs are NOT recommended as permanent replacements for a good ergonomic office chair.

- ▶ Exercise balls have many ergonomic deficiencies including:
 - ▶ Not height adjustable
 - ▶ No lumbar support
 - ▶ Lack of arm rests
 - ▶ Difficult to use keyboard without assuming an awkward reach
 - ▶ Sitting in a chair in a reclined position significantly reduces disc pressure in the back, but this position cannot be maintained while sitting on an exercise ball.

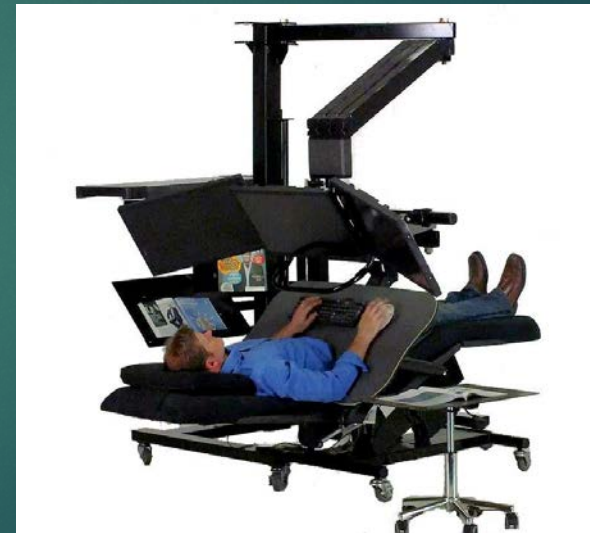
Exercise balls and ball chairs can be used for temporary seating, possibly to help with some core strengthening.



Anti-gravity chairs

While there can be no denying the comfort level of many of the zero-gravity chairs being sold today, this class of chairs can not be recommended for use in a typical office setting.


- ▶ Very expensive
- ▶ Difficult to work in
- ▶ Impractical



Back Belts for Lifting

- ▶ The use of back belts is not recommended for use as a means to prevent lower back injuries in the work place.
- ▶ Research indicates that the use of back belts has not been seen to be effective in preventing back pain at work (van Poppel et al., 1997; Källestål et al., 2004; Silverstein and Clark, 2004).
- ▶ OSHA and NIOSH do not recommend the mandatory use of back belts in the work place. Both organizations recommend that engineering controls be used to reduce the hazards of lifting. Secondly, training in identifying lifting hazards and safe lifting techniques should improve program effectiveness.





If you would like an ergonomic assessment of your work area contact:

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