

Set Your Chair, Support Your Spine

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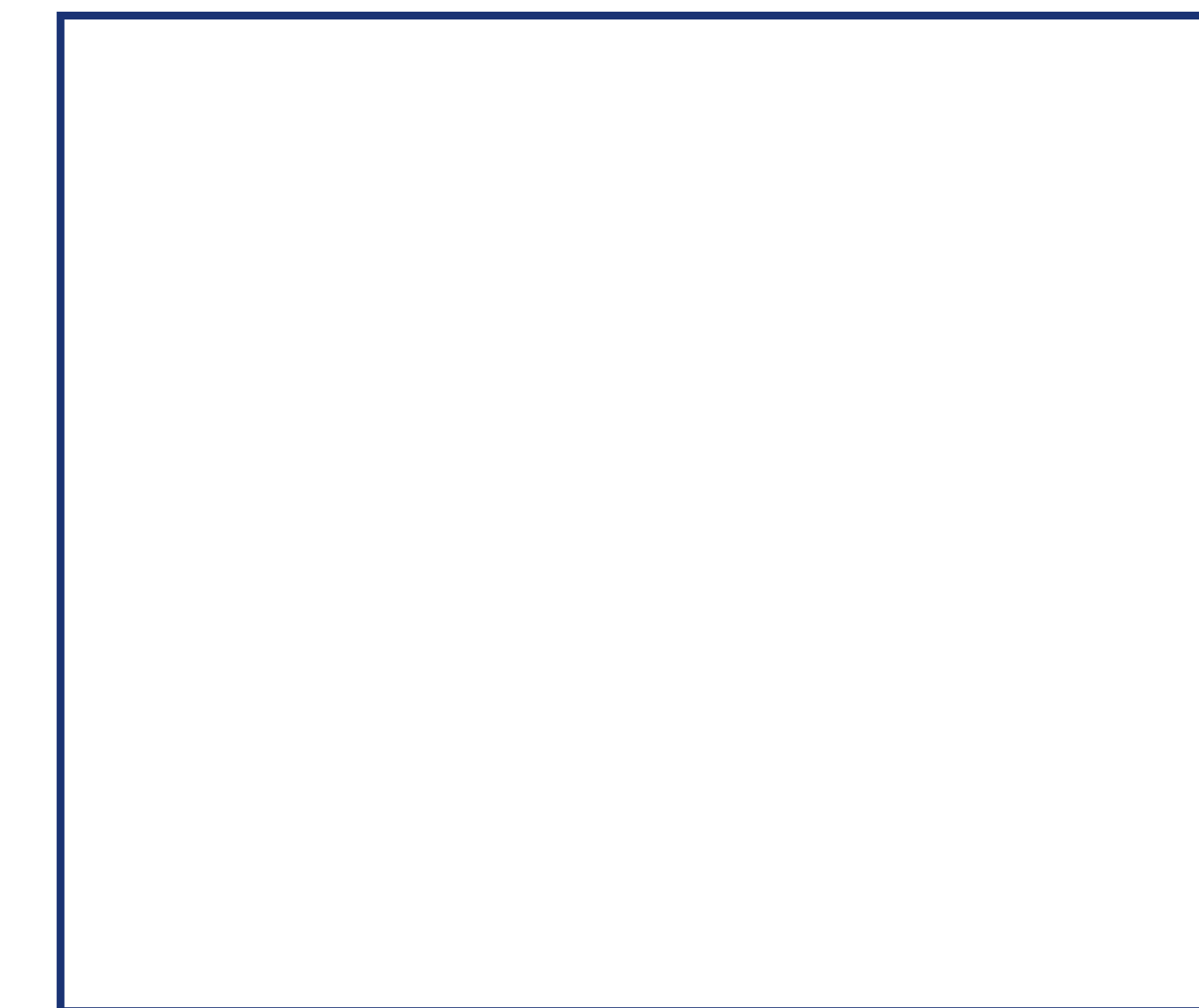
In the office, our aim should be the same as if we were pounding down a mogul run. That is, our spine should be neutral, balanced and stable.

In the office, our chairs and how we use them have a major impact on whether we are able to achieve this. For instance, did you know that sitting bolt upright is NOT the best position for your back? Ideally you should have your chair back slightly reclined (we're not talking La-Z-Boy). If you sit slightly back from vertical then gravity will keep you pressed back into firm contact with your chair backrest. If you sit bolt upright, the minute you shift your weight slightly forward to reach for your keyboard or mouse, gravity tries to push you over into a hunched posture.....and usually gravity comes out the winner!

Use the following tips to make sure your chair is a good fit:

- ✓ Are your hips shifted to the back of the seat?
- ✓ Are your feet comfortably flat on the floor?
- ✓ Is there 2"-4" of space between the back of your knees and the back of your leg?
- ✓ Do you have good contact between your back and the chair backrest?
- ✓ Is the inward curve in your low back supported by your chair?
- ✓ As the pictures show on the right, you can support your back safely in many seated positions. The key is to set up your work area and chair so that you can reach everything while sitting in a well supported posture. It doesn't matter how well your chair fits, if you lean forward out of it to squint at your monitor that is too far away, then all bets are off!

Try to eliminate the factors that pull you into a slouched posture, and then stand and stretch regularly – your back will thank you!



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