

Press release

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Wilkhahn's world premiere: office chair ON – the new dimension in dynamic seating

Design: wiege



Spacious, appealing and groundbreaking: office chair ON® stands for the new dimension in seating. Manufacturer: Wilkhahn, design: wiege; photo: Wilkhahn

After five years in development and with four decades of expertise in dynamic seating, office furniture manufacturer Wilkhahn is now presenting its innovative, three-dimensional dynamic office chair concept. For the first time, ON responds to demands long since made by leading healthcare professionals and ergonomists. An innovation throughout the world, ON gives our bodies the freedom to sit the way they want and can – and maintain their balance at the same time. At the core of the innovative concept lies Trimension®, synchro-supporting three-dimensional kinematics that exactly follows the positions of and scope of movement in the knee and hip joints. It activates and encourages entirely natural movement, so office work does not tire the body.

Bad Mnder. The latest, integrated studies on health issues, for example by the Bertelsmann Foundation, were the cornerstone for Wilkhahn's innovative office chair development. The studies reveal that attitudes to back pain and its treatment are the actual cause of what is now endemic and the most common health complaint. Therapies based on medication, avoidance tactics and passive treatments just prolong back pain because they switch off instead of activate the body's natural regulating mechanisms. Permanent warnings about back problems also tend to turn in to self-fulfilling prophecies.

Philosophy of prosthetics part of the problem

The predominant philosophy of prosthetics in office chair ergonomics implies correct and therefore incorrect sitting postures too. Increasingly complex adjustments are supposed to take strain off the body

Wilkhahn



At the heart of ON®: innovative Trimension® kinematics for synchro-supported, three-dimensional dynamic seating. Manufacturer: Wilkhahn, design: wiege; photo: Wilkhahn.



The new office chair ON®: a natural seating concept that's child's play. The picture illustrates the next office chair generation for a healthy and active office environment. Manufacturer: Wilkhahn, design: wiege; photo: Wilkhahn.

and as a result remove the body's natural inclinations to move about. And with no motivation to maintain control over our bodies, they degenerate and muscles atrophy. Consequently, recent scientific studies, such as those produced by the "Zentrum für Gesundheit" (Centre for Health) at the renowned German Sport University Cologne, cite a permanent lack of physical stimulation as the main cause of almost all illnesses in today's modern world. A lack of exercise and static maintenance of posture hinder metabolism. This leads to fatigue, tension, headaches and back pain and in the end skeletal degeneration. Therefore, the studies dispel the myth of correct and incorrect sitting postures and demand varied, dynamic muscle stimulation as frequently as possible in order to activate metabolic receptors. The objective is not to take preventative action, but to activate the whole body and therefore encourage more productivity in the workplace.

Supported dynamic seating is the key

The studies underscore the importance of Wilkhahn's office chair development principle over almost four decades. Back in 1972, in his Wilkhahn study entitled "From inflexible to dynamic seating", Hans Roericht advocated an active method of encouraging posture changes in the office environment. One of the objectives of the FS line in particular (1980) was to make seating an uncomplicated affair. The line became an international blueprint for easy-to-handle dynamic seating. The leaning aid Stitz (1973 and 1992) was a further addition to standing-sitting dynamics in the office. However, for 30 years and right up until today, prevalent and repeatedly more sophisticated synchro-adjustment mechanisms in office chairs are still based on mechanically-driven, two-dimensional jack knife ergonomics. Alternatives such as seating balls, sprung stools or chair designs with sideways tilting seats never really became popular. Because these products are instable, our bodies constantly have to keep their balance. When applied constantly, these exercise-based concepts tire and even over-tax our bodies if constant maintenance of postures is required. And for some people this is a source of irritation. As a result, ON's development was based on the principle of combining a maximum of natural movement with the best possible support to the body.



A new dimension in dynamic seating: ON® encourages synchro-supported three-dimensional rotational movements to activate the hips and back without causing fatigue. Manufacturer: Wilkhahn, design: wiege; photos: Wilkhahn.

Trimension® for supported, natural freedom of movement

In addition to flexing and stretching the back, three-dimensional flexibility of the hip joints is the key to stimulating the elasticity of the spine, the shoulder joints, as well as the back and neck muscles as an entire system. Not just axial forwards, backwards and sideways movements, but a combination of all three as rotations is important. Over five years, Wilkhahn engineers developed completely new kinematics for synchro-supported, three-dimensional seat and back movements. Trimension® consists of the coordinated interaction of dual mechanics and an extremely flexible seat and back design (Flexframe). Two separately flexible swing plates, just like two thighs, are connected near to the knees via a rotational axis. In the same position as the hip joints, they form fully flexible suspensions for the seat and backrest. The pivotal sections' positions and scope of movement follow the knee and hip joints. Consequently, it goes without saying that a completely new and natural flow of movement is encouraged. In any position, the body's centre of gravity stays between the pivotal sections and therefore in perfect balance. Prof. Dr. Ingo Froböse from the "Zentrum für Gesundheit" accompanied and verified the development. "This office chair stimulates a new range of natural postures and movement that activates the entire body. You could say that ON teaches seating how to walk".

Design and ease of use as a new dimension in health

Current preventative medicine studies indicate that aesthetic aspects also have a direct impact on people's feeling of well-being and performance. Seating contraptions that call to mind medical equipment and skeletal designs, can hamper the positive, intuitive and natural approach to controlling our own bodies. Therefore, top notch design is much more than just nice to have. Similarly to all Wilkhahn ranges, ON's design fulfils expectations of making the new dimension in seating a matter of course. The international well-known design studio wiege has produced a design that integrates clearly obvious movement functions into the swivel plates. ON offers space and appeal. ON immediately conveys trust, assurance, value and comfort which is underscored by the enclosed shape of the die-cast aluminium swing plates. The chair offers scope for different postures



Quality of design and ease of use as health factors: the three-dimensional flexibility of ON® is clearly evident in the appealing and understated design. Manufacturer: Wilkhahn, design: wiege; photos: Wilkhahn

and the backrest covered on both sides creates a sense of consistency. Form follows intuitive handling. By just pressing two buttons and the integrated, adjustment system for regulating your own personal counterpressure (4.5 rotations for a 45 – 120 kg weight range) the office chair is immediately ready to go. Your body and the chair will manage all the rest. So your mind can concentrate on the job at hand.

An extensive, top value product range

With an extensive range of standard features and optional seat-depth adjustment, ON fulfils all relevant global demands and standards. ON is available in a broad range of models with three backrest heights and three types of upholstery. As a result, all swivel chair areas in a company, from the reception to the executive board, can be catered for in equally high aesthetic and ergonomic quality. The wide range of designs to choose from, with finishes, covers and colours, as well as matching four-legged and cantilever chairs, ensure co-ordinated and coherent design in offices, but also in meeting and conference rooms.

The concept implements the simplest, integrated solution conceivable and does not just reduce aesthetic complexity, but also the range of parts required. The combination of state-of-the-art design and manufacturing processes produces an office chair that is extremely good value. In addition to Trimension®, ON already offers backrest covers with micro-cushioning effect, adjustment of the backrest by simply pushing it and the synchro-adjustable, integrated 3D armrests in its standard version already. The list price is 569 EUR plus VAT.

Preview of events:

Prof. Dr. Ingo Froböse, from the German Sport University Cologne and Burkhard Remmers, Wilkhahn, Bad Münde, will be talking about the current health research findings. They will also explain the consequences for office chair ergonomics and outline the new milestone in dynamic seating:

Congress agenda at the health and safety at work fair, A + A Düsseldorf, "Innovationen für sichere und gesunde Unternehmen" (Innovations for safe and healthy companies)

Wilkhahn

**6 November 2009, focus:
"ergonomics + health in the office"**

**11 a.m. – 11.20 a.m.
"Farewell to the ergonomic strait jacket – the
new freedom in seating"**

Why not come and try ON at A + A in Düsseldorf?
**3 to 6 November, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m., Wilkhahn
stand in hall 7a, stand C07**

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