



More Than Just a Chair

LABORATORY SEATING

by Jim Connell

When selecting seating for laboratory environments, decision-makers should prioritize discipline-focused design, quality construction, and style. Ergonomic support and enhanced user well-being should always top the list of criteria, however, considering the long hours and frequent relocation of scientists, technicians, and researchers between workstations. Given the direct nature of tasks unique to bioscience, biopharma, chemistry, clinical, R&D, and numerous other applications every chair, and stool must not only be up to the job; they must facilitate several jobs.



Here are a few considerations for decision-makers to discuss with prospective seating providers:

1. What kind of laboratory will be outfitted? This question helps to categorize seating in terms of componentry, finishes, and special options such as the need for bleachable or antimicrobial upholstery, easy-wipe-down configurations vs. higher rated clean room, and/or electrostatic performance packages, etc.
2. Specifically, what tasks are performed by researchers and technicians? Considerations may include whether work performed is precise and up-close, such as microscopy; if workers frequently move from station to station; and the surface height at which tasks are conducted—bench height, desktop, or somewhere in between.
3. Does the laboratory operate on single or multiple shifts? Seating durability can

vary greatly depending on the brand or model selected. Regardless of the choice, it will impact the bottom line.

4. Are custom applications a consideration? Workers with special needs or unique tasks can require a one-off solution.
5. Are specific code requirements mandated? Decision-makers must ensure that seating choices meet fire and safety codes.

Uniqueness, Adaptability and Commonalities

While adaptability is important—and every scenario has its own unique characteristics—there are some commonalities specific to lab work regardless of discipline. Unlike office work, laboratorians routinely perform experiments and conduct tasks from higher seated positions, in many instances while leaning forward. In addition to accommodating different working heights and task-related user postures, lab seating must comply with

pertinent government standards and industry specifications. Additionally—today more than ever—easy and effective cleanability, including withstanding frequent exposure to cleaners and disinfectants, is paramount.

The first things we look at when designing laboratory seating is the layout of the space where it will be used, the tasks to be performed by the users, and how the chair or stool will be expected to function in that context. It's also vital to have the right conversations with the right people at the right time. In large part, working with various stakeholders has meant reimagining the components of chairs from the top down. In real-world user research conducted by BioFit, many facility managers—particularly those overseeing multiple lab installations—demanded seating solutions that addressed organization-wide ergonomic concerns in one complete package, with advanced functionality and associated detailed adjustments to help workers stay comfortable, productive, alert, and on-task

NEW UPDATED CLAIMS

ALL LIFE STAGES OF BEDBUGS

SCORPIONS

FLIES

MOSQUITOES

STERIFAB®

MUCH MORE THAN A DISINFECTANT

800 359-4913 • STERIFAB.COM

Kay Park Recreation

1-800-553-2476
www.kaypark.com
sales@kaypark.com



Many Site Furnishings at www.kaypark.com



Enrich Student Experience

Enhance Your Campus with "America's Finest"



For Your Athletic Department



It Pays to Buy Kay's Since 1954!

throughout the workday. Nearly every specifier interviewed described a desire for seating that reflected the look and brand image found in their office counterparts.

Elevation, Posture, and Motion

When choosing laboratory seating, decision-makers must understand how the working postures and movements, as well as the primary responsibilities of users within numerous disciplines, can differ dramatically from those of staff in other, more conventional work environments. In contrast to office settings, where the typical desk working height is 29", working heights in laboratory applications can run 6-12" higher, and needs can change quickly according to task requirements. Working at the upper end of a high-bench seat height range also brings unit stability into question, especially with ergonomic controls that encourage tilting and reclining postures; for these reasons, it's

vital for seating to have a 5-star base with a diameter wide enough to alleviate concern over tipping mishaps.

Many tasks also require laboratorians to lean forward in their chairs to perform them as opposed to their office counterparts, who routinely sit at a roughly 90-degree angle on average to their keyboard and monitor. Conducting intensely focused activities in a forward-leaning seated posture shifts the weight of the upper torso and head directly over the thigh area, putting additional pressure on the lumbar region of the back and potentially cutting off blood circulation to the lower legs, even when using a chair with waterfall-front edge. Special attention should be taken to source lab seating that addresses forward-leaning postures to help enhance the well-being of users.

Selecting chairs with properly sized and adjustable backrests is vital to providing lumbar support and keeping users both comfortable and performing at their best.

Unlike office work, laboratorians routinely perform experiments and conduct tasks from higher seated positions, in many instances while leaning forward. In addition to accommodating different working heights and task-related user postures, lab seating must comply with pertinent government standards and industry specifications.



AquaticAccess
.com

**Simpler
is Smarter**

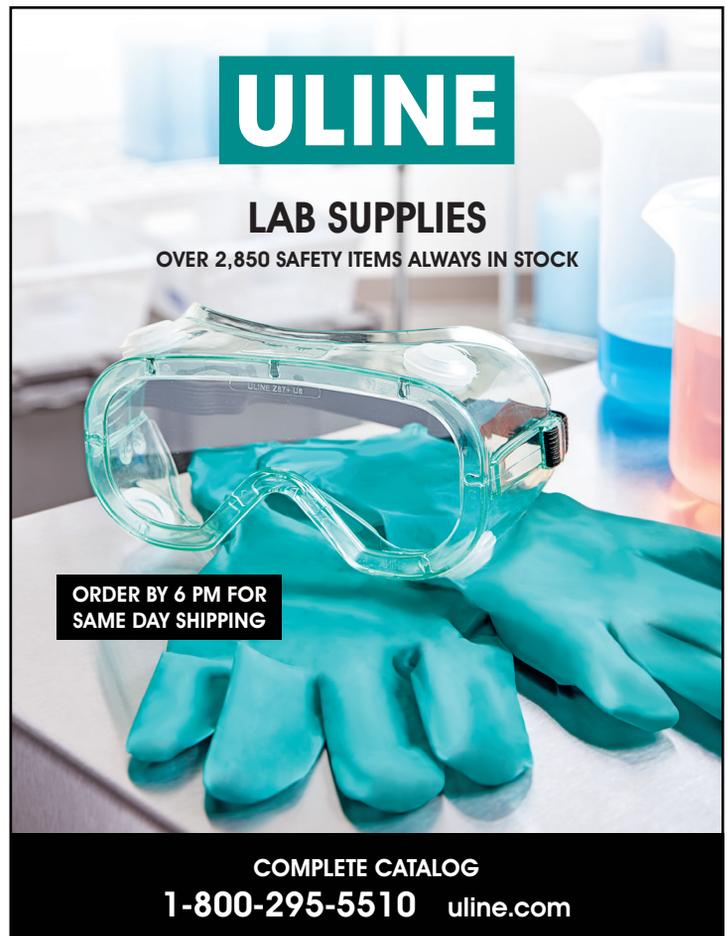
Water flows in -
the seat goes up
Water flows out -
the seat goes down

No electricity,
batteries,
charging,
remotes,
actuators,
contacts,
solar cells,
gears, motors,
brushes, oils,
pumps, or
extensive
maintenance
schedules

**800.325.LIFT
502.425.5817**

*"Our students love our lift!
It's easy maintenance, actually no maintenance.
It's a wonderful product. Get one!"*

Karen Sato, Gavilan College, Gilroy, CA



ULINE

LAB SUPPLIES

OVER 2,850 SAFETY ITEMS ALWAYS IN STOCK

ORDER BY 6 PM FOR
SAME DAY SHIPPING

COMPLETE CATALOG
1-800-295-5510 uline.com



PHOTO COURTESY BIOFIT

Optimally, like all ergonomic functions, backrest adjustments should require minimal effort.

Component Details

Other features that can prove invaluable to user comfort and productivity are sometimes only available as options on lab seating. Depending on the task and environment, specifiers should determine if the chairs they consider include the following:

1. Casework permitting, comfortable adjustable armrests that accommodate the physical characteristics of respective users and can be repositioned in multiple directions
2. Foot rings on models designed for bench or high-bench height applications that adjust easily and stay put once positioned
3. Casters that resist movement when the chair is unoccupied, aiding worker safety by helping ensure seating doesn't roll away when the user stands up

4. Control lock-out to prevent unintended motion while conducting precision tasks

Cleanability and Disinfectability

In non-technical workplaces--despite cleanliness standards not being as strictly mandated as in critical-performance environments—facility managers have always understood the strong correlation between workstation cleanliness and productivity. In laboratories, however, proper cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting of furnishings and equipment can mean the difference between life and death, as well as affecting the outcome of tests and experiments. Because of these high stakes, decision-makers must look for seating that's easy to clean, including the following specifications: assemblies with minimal gaps, components engineered to prevent buildup of debris and microbes, and substructures that do not pose obstacles to effective cleaning. Seating materials should resist breaking down under cleaners, disinfectants, and frequent cleaning protocols, particularly in the face of the current pandemic.

Durability and ROI

In addition to checking warranty length and coverage when choosing laboratory seating, decision-makers should consider component construction, finishes, and upholstery durability. Things to keep in mind include ensuring that seat and backrest edges can withstand damage from inadvertent collisions with benches and case goods, that metal finishes stand up to wear and frequent cleaning, and confirming that selected upholsteries are resistant to chemicals and fluids and rated for the intended use and length of service.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Jim Connell is the president of BioFit Engineered Products, a trailblazer and innovator in the design

and manufacture of ergonomic seating for scientific and technical workspaces for over 75 years. For more information on their laboratory and educational seating solutions, contact BioFit at marketing@biofit.com.

TOUCH-FREE CALLING



E-30TF-IP



E-32TF-IP



E-20TF-IP

Goodbye germs, hello hands-free!

These Touch-Free VoIP Entry Phones are equipped with Viking's touchless motion sensor. A simple wave over the sensor will activate a call. Touch-free calling eliminates the exposure to germs and bacteria from typical push button switches.

The phones provide quick and reliable handsfree communication for SIP VoIP phone systems with PoE. They can be programmed from any touch tone phone, PC, or remotely using a static IP address.



Learn more about
**TOUCH-FREE
CALLING**

VIKING

 DESIGNED, MANUFACTURED,
AND SUPPORTED IN THE USA



Start planning your installation!

715.386.8861

vikingelectronics.com