

Stressless? Useless ? Keith J Cockburn

Since building and advertising my “Back-to-Front” chair for the relief of spinal problems I have been innovated by E-Mails advertising the stress-less and other supposedly back friendly office chairs.

These are nothing except minor modifications of a normal chair. The “Stress-less” features a reclining position which is not unlike sitting up in bed when the foot stool is being used. The office chairs generally have a curved lumbar region on the backrest. Neither is much of an innovation. In contrast the “Back-to-Front” chair is designed to provide traction for the spine so that the spinal discs are relieved. Much of back pain is attributed to these discs and their associated nerves. I designed it when I suffered from a painful bout of sciatica after twisting my back resulting from a fall from a slippery rock while out on the fells.

A major criticism has been that “It does not look like a chair”. Well you cannot have everything it’s designed to do a job. As an engineer I am trained to think of every problem analytically appearance is secondary. If people do not accept this it’s their problem. I once had a telephone call from an irate back sufferer; this was as a result of a local leaflet distribution session. He was an ex-drawing office person who was on an extremely strong dose of pain killers, he called me a quack and really “vented his spleen” on me. The chair tackles the “root of the problem” if people want to dose themselves up on ever increasing amounts of pain killers its up to them. I have noticed that typists and VDU operators sometimes have similar back problems.

Ever since we derived from walking on all fours not to mention living longer we as humans have suffered from the ravages of gravity. This I would think leads to hernias in addition to back problems. Unless you feel like doing a stint in the space station there is no escape.

I have tried to offer the chair to the medical profession with no takers it seems they too are biased against it. If anyone is interested I would make it clear that they try it at their own risk I cannot afford to be sued for massive amounts by ambulance chasers.