

test

RESULTS FROM THE WIRED LABS 09.09

WORK CHAIRS / **LAWNMOWERS** /
STEAM IRONS / ULTRA-SLIM LAPTOPS



HOW WE RATE

- 1> A complete failure in every way
- 2> Barely functional – don't buy it
- 3> Serious flaws – buy with caution
- 4> Downsides outweigh upsides
- 5> Recommended with reservations
- 6> A solid product with some issues
- 7> Very good, but not quite great
- 8> Excellent, with only a few niggles
- 9> Nearly flawless – buy it now
- 10> Metaphysical product perfection

Humanscale's Diffrient
World seat: cool,
calm and collected
(see D on page 121)

IKEA MARKUS

This is the cheapest of our test chairs, and the specs are sparse in comparison to the others; all you get is seat height adjustment. The Markus's high, fixed armrests meant we couldn't get the chair to fit under our desks. They were also too wide to rest our arms on and still type comfortably - but you'll know how to take them off, as you screwed the chair together. The Markus leans back, but you'll always be fighting the too-firm springs, and the lumbar support is non-adjustable. The mesh backrest does keep you cool, though. £97 ikea.co.uk

WIRED Still beats a standard office chair
TIRED Leaning back requires physical effort



HERMAN MILLER EMBODY

The hugely expensive Embody is co-designed by Bill Stumpf, creator of the Aeron chair found in every dot-com-bubble CEO's office. It's elegant from the front, but plain weird from the rear (see *opposite page*), thanks to its lattice-like artificial spine. The backrest has 38 suspension points to "support you through the full range of working postures" - and it does make a difference. If you lean back and use the armrests - angled to suit the width of a keyboard - the Embody makes for relaxed working. £1,250 www.hermanmiller.co.uk

WIRED Comfortable
TIRED Slightly moist shirt; empty wallet



RH AMBIO 220

The Ambio's looks attracted some criticism, with test subjects claiming the chair made them "feel like Davros". We were impressed with the sitting experience, though. The chair is complicated, but this is a positive thing, as it's highly adaptable (and it has thorough instructions). The seat height, forward and backward positions are all adjustable, as is the backrest height. A screw-knob changes the resistance of the backrest spring, so you can set it to lean back with you, then support you at the desired angle. From £925 rhchairs.co.uk

WIRED Lots of scope for personalisation
TIRED Impromptu Dalek impressions



HUMANSCALE DIFFRIENT WORLD CHAIR

Of all the chairs on test, this was the most admired; the deputy art director said that he "could die happy here", and its striking design drew lots of compliments. The Diffrient's trick is to keep it simple but smart - you can only adjust seat height and depth, but the rear of the chair has pivots in the centre and at the bottom, so the seat slides forwards as you lean back, making for comfortable sitting. The only downside was our pre-production model's faulty air-pressure unit, which caused the chair to lower steadily. £500 humanscale.com

WIRED Looks and feels very classy
TIRED A sinking feeling



SENATOR S21 ENIGMA

The S21's upholstery doesn't breathe, so we quickly felt sweaty and uncomfortable. Seat depth, backrest height and backrest resistance can all be tweaked, but we found it hard to achieve a neutral posture, as the chair pushed us upright. One tester said: "It feels like it's telling me how to sit." Unlike the Markus, the armrests adjust so we could slide it under our desk. The headrest adjusts for height and depth, but there's no way to lock it in place, so minimal pressure ruins your careful positioning. £755 www.senator.co.uk

WIRED Plenty of tweaking options
TIRED Heats up fast

