THE CHAIR

Politics, Sociology and How to sit on one

Rachel Kelly  BA MSTAT
Food for Thought Lunchtime Talk
5 Sept 2018
What are they?

- Evolving social purpose
- Display of hierarchy
When did it all start?

- In cave paintings? - no
  - Up to 40,000 years ago
- In the New Stone Age - yes
  - 10,000 – 4,000 BC
- Widespread in Egypt and Mesopotamia
Through the ages

- The Romans
- The Greeks
Through more ages

- afterwards...
- The medieval period
The Renaissance and beyond

- Ostentatious and sumptuous
- Ease, luxury and flexibility, padding
C20

- Social elite adopted physical freedom
- Style cf function
Style vs function
The Modern Office

- Corporate image
- The need for status
- The need to get rid of status
- Worker health
- Creativity
Sitting Today

- How we sit
- Why we sit as we do
- Sitting more + more

- Can we sit comfortably?
- Yes

Forward head posture in cervical spine

- Elongated, inactive and weak upper back muscles with T spine curvature
- Shoulder Internal Rotation
- Shortened pec muscles

- Reduced hip flexion
- Elongated, inactive and weak glutes
- Shortened hamstrings
Moving at your seat
Think on your feet not your seat
Your spine is your core

- What's your spine for?

- Which is the most crucial joint? – where your head balances on top of your spine (rebalancing up to 11 times per second)

- Standing on your sitting bones
The Use of the Self

- How we use ourselves as we work - affects how we function
  - Unconscious Habits (slumping, pressing down and contracting)

- End-gaining versus paying attention to the process
  - Peering forward towards a goal vs being in the moment

- Non-doing –
  - Heightened awareness
  - Thinking upward (non doing)
  - Releasing by allowing muscles to lengthen
Everyday Constructive Rest

- Rejuvenating, creating internal space
- NON-DOING: Semi-supine – alert, thinking, non-doing
- 15-20 mins per day
- Head on books, eyes open
- Feet hip-width apart, knees up, not falling inwards
- Hands on your belly, elbows outwards, space in your armpits
 References

- Galen Cranz 1998  *The Chair* Norton
- University of California - Los Angeles. "Sitting is bad for your brain -- not just your metabolism or heart: Thinning in brain regions important for memory linked to sedentary habits." ScienceDaily, 12 April 2018.