

Guidance on Flooring, Task Chairs, and Chair Mats

This guidance includes information on flooring, task chairs, chair casters (i.e., wheels), and chair mats.

- Task chairs are designed to roll on firm surfaces with suitable casters.
 - Firm surfaces include:
 - Hard flooring such as wood, tile, or linoleum.
 - Firm carpeting without padding, such as the carpeting found onsite at UCSF.
 - Chair casters need to match the type of flooring they are used on.
 - Carpet casters, also called "hard casters," are for use on carpets. These casters will roll too fast on hard flooring and may lead to injuries or damage flooring.
 - Hard floor casters, also called "soft casters," are for use on hard flooring, such as wood or linoleum. These casters will not roll well on carpets.
- Taking care of your chair's casters:
 - If your chair casters do not roll easily, or if they move too easily, you may have the wrong type of casters, or they may need to be cleaned or replaced.
 - Contact the chair manufacturer for support.
 - Clean casters regularly. Debris can get stuck in the casters and impact their ability to roll.
- If working from home or working remotely:
 - In residential/home environments, carpeting or rugs are often thicker and softer than industrial carpeting. This may create risks related to chair use.
 - Use chairs on hard flooring or on firm, industrial-style carpets.
 - Relocate area rugs.
- If using a firm surface is not possible, consider the following:
 - Work in an alternate location, including onsite, where firmer flooring is available.
 - Consider using a chair mat, with the understanding that chair mats may not work well in all environments.
- Understand the risks of using chairs on softer carpets and chair mats.
 - Casters can create indentations in carpets and on chair mats (even firm ones) making the chair hard to move. This occurs because of the weight of the chair, pressure from the casters, and because one tends to work in the same location.
 - When wheels are locked into indentations, it can limit movement when sitting in the chair and increase the risk of awkward postures and injuries.
 - Flooring and chair mats may be damaged and need to be replaced.
- If using a chair mat:
 - Order a firm chair mat that is large enough, so your chair casters do not roll off the edges. When measuring, consider where you will move the chair around while working.
 - Avoid creating trip hazards at the edges of the mat.

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- Some chair mats are available from BearBuy.