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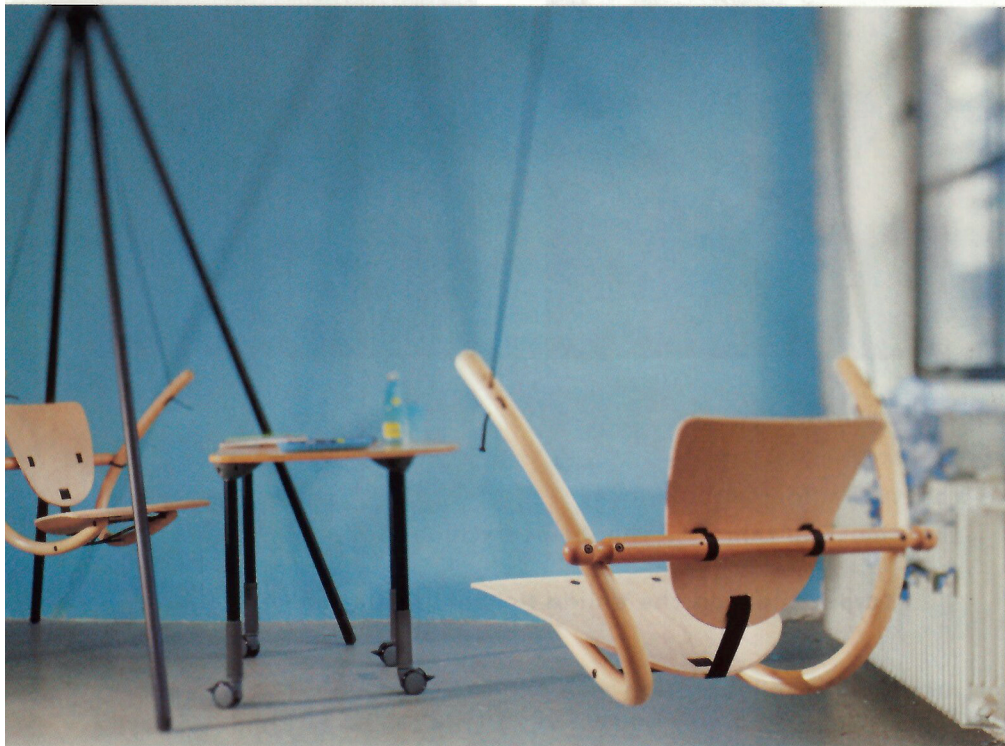
**Best of NeoCon® Awards**



# Keep on Swingin'


Combining ergonomics, green design, and a touch of whimsy, HÅG's Swing chair carves a unique niche in the seating market

By Katie Weeks



As the result of his questioning, Swing emerges as a sleek interpretation of its playground namesake. Crafted out of oiled beech, it comes in two models—a pyramid version and a suspended version—and is designed to mimic the body's natural inclination for movement, which promotes circulation and overall mental and physical well-being. "Ideally, we should be alternating between actively using our muscles and relaxing them all the time during all our various activities," including sitting at a desk, Opsvik says.

It's designed for many users: Although Swing's wooden seat is currently available in only one size, it will hold up to 264 lbs. What's more, the chair builds a strong case for green design. "Compared with traditional office chairs, we have done away with casters, bases, lifting columns, and complicated tipping devices. The rope performs all of these functions and more. In addition, the materials are renewable wood," Opsvik says. "Studies show that the ceiling version of Swing represents 1/10 of the environmental impact of other working chairs. This is equal to 'Factor 10,' an important concept in environmentally conscious design."

But design is only one selling factor. How will Swing fare in a modern office? Arguing its practicality, Opsvik says it is best suited to work in conjunction with a lightweight table on wheels in a laptop or paperless work environment. Likewise, HÅG recommends using Swing with an individually placed table that is both mobile and height adjustable. Unfortunately, Opsvik says, this is also the biggest design challenge. "HÅG does not manufacture tables so we have no control over this important part of the concept," he notes. But, both HÅG and Opsvik believe the concept will sell itself. After all, Opsvik notes, as Duke Ellington once said, "It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing."  Circle No. 201

If you listened closely to the hallway chatter while walking around Chicago's Merchandise Mart at NeoCon® this past June, it was hard to miss the buzz building around HÅG's new introduction. "Have you seen it? Did you try it? Will it work in a corporate office?" attendees asked. Whether it flies or not in corporate America, HÅG's new Swing chair has certainly got people talking. At first sight, it looks like an office accessory, a whimsical nod to childhood, or perhaps the latest interpretation of the foosball table or basketball-hoop-in-the-conference-room aesthetic. But looking closer at Swing, it becomes apparent that the chair offers more than a unique appearance.

Designed by one of HÅG's longtime design partners, Norwegian designer Peter Opsvik, Swing is the product of creativity and new thinking in

regards to both ergonomics and the workplace environment. Its design is based on the concept of movement. "If you think about it, when we stand waiting for a bus or a train, we could stand totally still, but none of us does. If we have the choice, we move," says Opsvik. Why, he wondered, should we be immobile when sitting at a desk? Although Opsvik had studied and experimented with suspended seating for a number of years, he became increasingly intrigued during a vacation to Mexico. There, he observed how people were using hammocks and suspended seating, and how it freed them from the confines of a regular chair. "I never saw anyone sitting still at all," he recalls. "They were all in motion." He began to wonder how this concept would translate into the office environment.