

The new Icon™ series by **NeutralPosture**



NeoCon Showroom 10-153

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INDUSTRY MOMENTS



AROUND THE INDUSTRY THE PAST WEEK

1. Allsteel ManMade Natural Event in Boston held on Wednesday, May 25th. **2.** Boss Design Showroom during Clerkenwell Design Week. **3.** Office furniture dealer American Office celebrated Red Nose Day on Wednesday, May 25th. **4.** Bill Dowzer shares his vision for the new legal workplace at Worktech16 held in NYC last Thursday. **5.** Perkins+Will Chicago Celebrates Red Nose Day. **6.** Allsteel's Architect and Design Manager A.J. Paron-Wildes spoke at C2Montreal last Tuesday.

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PREVIEW
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Neutral Posture Tries On New Look

Neutral Posture has a reputation for building rugged chairs that can stand up to harsh office environments, which used to be code for building bulky, clunky chairs. Icon is a serious shift in the company's design language, as is Renati, another chair but at a lower price point, that Neutral Posture will show at NeoCon. **Words by Rob Kirkbride**

If you had to wear the same clothes to work day after day, it would get pretty boring. Everyone likes to change their look. When it comes to the task chair, the only way to change the look of it is to replace it.

But what if you could just switch out the fabric on the seat cushion when you wore it out or simply got sick of the color? That's exactly what you can do with Icon, the new chair Neutral Posture will launch at NeoCon. Just remove a few simple clips, pull the old cover off, put a new one on and voila! You have a new chair.

If that were the only innovation on the new Icon, it would be enough for any designer to consider the chair. Icon is a sleek, beautiful mesh chair that is easy to adjust with no tension knob. And for Neutral Posture, it is yet another example of how the Texas-based office furniture maker is seriously upping its position in the industry.



Neutral Posture has a reputation for building rugged chairs that can stand up to harsh office environments, which used to be code for building bulky, clunky chairs. Icon is a serious shift in the company's design language, as is Renati, another chair but at a lower price point, that Neutral Posture will show at NeoCon.

Icon and Renati will be shown in a completely revamped Neutral Posture showroom at the Merchandise Mart.

After two years of work folding the Equity system it purchased from Knoll into the company, Neutral Posture is ready to start investing in its seating once again, said Rebecca Boenigk, chief executive officer. "These past two years we've really focused on Equity, really focused on working on the systems line," she said. "During that time, we didn't have enough time for doing seating and systems at the same time. Once we got through that main push for NeoCon last year, we started working on these new seating products."

Boenigk admits style was not Neutral Posture's strong suit when it came to seating products. It needed new chairs, products that would be A&D-driven that are sleek, but also stay true to the company's ergonomic roots. "The chairs had to be comfortable, but they also had to be gorgeous," Boenigk said.

So Icon was designed with style and substance in mind. Its frames come in black or gray with a number of options in cylinders, bases and arms. It also is easy to adjust. As the back reclines, the seat pan moves forward slightly. There is no tension adjustment. What really makes it unique is the replaceable upholstery on the seat. The seat pan itself pops out, and the upholstery slips off. No tools are required, and there are no complicated connectors.

"I'm an over-50 female with the weakest hands," Boenigk said. "I can do it easily. The ad-

vantage is that if you want to change the fabric, you don't have to do anything other than pop a new cover on. You can do it right in the field."

The ability to swap out fabrics (the top 10 fabrics will be graded in with Neutral Posture's partners) allows designers to change the look of a space easily and for a lot less money than it would cost to replace all the chairs. The Icon lists for \$717 and tops out at just over \$1,000. Most of the design on Icon was done in-house.

It was important for Neutral Posture to assure the chair was ready to ship as soon as it was introduced. The chair will be in full production by NeoCon, and Neutral Posture's reps will have samples in the field.

Icon and Renati will be shown in a completely revamped Neutral Posture showroom at the Merchandise Mart. Janet Rauscher with Route 8, a Louisville-based design firm, was in charge of the project, and Boenigk promises visitors to the tenth floor will "see us from a ways away."

A lot of thinking went into the new showroom design and branding efforts, said Matt Prochaska, vice president of sales. The showroom and new products are all part of a larger rebranding effort, designed to change the image of the company, but also more practically, to bring the systems and seating together in a cohesive form.

"That gives us a much larger appeal to the A&D market," Boenigk said. "We have a lot of products that help people from a wellness standpoint. We want to make obvious that we are not a niche player anymore. We have the best products for everyone."

Renati is a new chair that fits into a lower price point, but with the same design attributes as Icon. Renati lists between \$507 and \$867, depending on the options.

Prochaska said the company has a new motto going forward: "We figured it out so you don't have to."

Based on the new chairs, new showroom and new focus of Neutral Posture, it appears as if they have figured it out. **BoF**



Neutral Posture's Icon