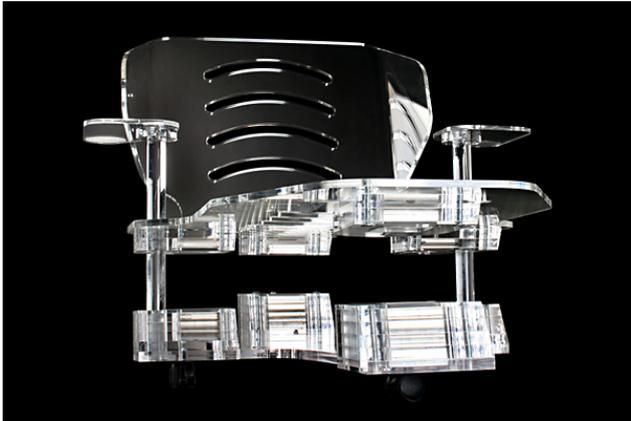


Isn't Floating Enough?

Written by Jeffrey Wagg
Saturday, 18 October 2008 05:55



Swift Reader Jeff McVann sends us:

I went to Wired Magazine's NEXTFEST in Chicago last weekend. There was plenty of cool and useful technology to be seen, but I was very disappointed to see the "Hoverit Lounger." It is a plastic chair with magnets that make it "float." A picture can be found here: <http://gizmodo.com/346269/hoverit-lounger-relaxation-through-levitation> Besides looking very uncomfortable - note that it is a solid plastic chair, and the arm rests stay put while the seat moves up and down - but the brochure also states "...inventor Keith Dixon claims the lounger's magnetic fields can help those suffering from backaches, headaches and muscular discomfort."

Price? \$11,000!!! They say a fool and his money are soon parted. Only a fool would buy this chair.

Keep up the good work!

There's no real mystery in how it works. It appears to be an array of neodymium magnets arranged so that the poles oppose each other. These magnets are extremely strong, and actually quite dangerous: improperly handled, magnets of the size needed to float a person on a chair could crush fingers.

See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drfEF0c2nh0> for a video demonstration of the unit. First I have to say this. Cool! I mean, hey, it's a floating lounge chair. Second, I have to say.. it

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doesn't look that comfortable, and though I'd like to try one, I don't think I'd buy one at any price. Third, the inventor also says that the chair will stop pacemakers and erase credit cards, and from that, I have to assume it would not be a wise platform for reclined laptop use. And if you put it in front of a tube-style television, you might think someone slipped something into your drink. Still cool.. but not something for every household.

All that said, I have to rail against the misleading and unnecessary health claims. Once again, there is no good evidence that magnetic fields are helpful in preventing back aches, aiding in healing, or anything like that. A [2006 study](#) by Professor Leonard Finegold of Drexel University in Philadelphia and Professor Bruce Flamm of the Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in California found no positive effect for the application of magnets for health claims.

This is old news to *Swift* readers. But honestly, I have to wonder why they bothered adding health claims at all? I mean.. it's a FLOATING CHAIR!!! Isn't that cool enough? If it's not, well, I suppose they could add some LEDs or a fake light saber to it. Maybe it could vibrate.

In the end, I expect this device will be found in the homes of a few eccentric millionaires and that's it, but the press release will have a fairly wide viewership, and that will lend credence to the apparently false idea that magnet therapy is a real and useful phenomenon.