

La-Z-Boy Loungers Encyclopedia Article

La-Z-Boy Loungers

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La-Z-Boy Loungers

The La-Z-Boy Lounger, a reclining chair also known as the "easy chair," is a heavily padded item of furniture, generally upholstered in naugahyde or other, similarly tough and durable fabric, and boasts a built-in ottoman. By pulling a side lever, one can simultaneously recline the chair back and kick out the attached footrest, arriving at a position somewhere between sitting and lying down.

Ed Shoemaker and Ed Knabusch of Monroe, Michigan made the first loungers in 1927. Combining the science of ergonomics with automobile and airplane seat design, they developed what would eventually become the La-Z-Boy. In 1941, Edward Barcalo licensed the design of Dr. Anton Lorenz for a "scientifically articulated" chair, which he dubbed the "Barcalounger," and which became La-Z-Boy's largest competitor.

These chairs, which sacrifice high style for immediate comfort and versatility, have remained enduring American symbols of low-brow masculine tastes. Although many companies have produced loungers throughout the century, La-Z-Boy remains the most popular brand and has become the generic name for them all.

Further Reading:

Patton, Phil. *Made in U.S.A. The Secret Histories of the Things That Made America*. New York, Grove Weidenfeld, 1992.

Stern, Jane, and Michael Stern. *The Encyclopedia of Bad Taste*. New York, Harper Collins, 1990.