

# ATG to fit sports car-style seating across its theatres

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Sports car-style seats are to be fitted in the Ambassador Theatre Group's 39 venues in order to make audiences more comfortable.

ProBax seat technology is designed to correct posture, leading to reduced backache and muscle fatigue, while developers also claim that improved blood and oxygen flow increases concentration.

The technology is used in Lotus cars and is under trial with aircraft companies across the world.

ATG is the first theatre operator to use the ProBax design, and plans to introduce the seats in all its UK theatres, changing 49,000 chairs as and when they need upgrading. The company's Fortune Theatre in the West End will be the first with the new technology, with the seats in the stalls being changed later this month.

Speaking to The Stage, ATG property director David Blyth said: "You feel more secure, in the sense that you are not just sinking into the base. It's more supportive.

"You know what it is like when you are at the theatre and you are half an hour or an hour in, and suddenly you start fidgeting around because you can't quite get comfortable. You get none of that."

He explained that ATG initially replaced a single seat in the Fortune Theatre. When customers who were couples booked the chair, the company asked them to swap seats at the interval. Blyth said around 80% of the test couples stated that the new seating was more comfortable.

The ProBax technology does not require changes to the seat frame, design or upholstery, and seats can be upgraded by changing the base cushion alone. Blyth said there was only a small additional cost per seat to upgrade to ProBax. The cushions are also expected to last longer than regular seating.

The seats are being made for ATG by Kirwin and Simpson of Essex. The ProBax technology has been secured under licence from Surrey-based NuBax Ltd.

Last year the ProBax technology won the Furniture Industry Research Association's innovation award.