



Footwork

How to take care of working feet

Everyone's got them, and some of us work them pretty hard. I'm talking about our feet. We tend to take them for granted—until the day they are painful, and then, all too often, we can think of little else.



No one can be 100% productive with feet that hurt. That's why we're pleased to offer you information about taking care of your feet—at work and at home.

No one should have to suffer while at work, and there are things you can do for increased comfort and to make your job easier. Foot problems tend to worsen if ignored, but are often highly treatable if caught in time. We hope to offer ideas and suggestions as well as answer your questions about foot health.

We care about your well-being and hope in this small way to promote foot safety and health. We appreciate your attention and would like to encourage those with foot problems to come forward so we may offer our services.

The special problems of feet on the job

No feet hurt like working feet. If you stand upright on the job, you know what we're talking about. Aching feet, sore legs, and bad backs are all too common in today's workplace—and a major cause of lost work days.

Foot problems can start in childhood and may get worse and more prevalent as we get older. By the time we reach middle age, most of us have a pronounced need to treat one or more foot problems—especially those who are on their feet all day.

Constant standing, constant pressure

So what's the matter with standing—that's what feet were designed for, right? Your feet were designed for standing, but they weren't designed to do it all day, or on superhard surfaces, or in extremes of heat or cold. Today, a real problem for working feet is that the work they do is constant—it never lets up. You don't have to be unloading merchandise and stocking shelves to suffer: all you have to do is stand for 8 hours or longer.

When you're standing, your feet can get tired quickly. Standing can be hard work. In addition, the constant pounding of walking takes a toll, especially in older adults, who have lost some of the natural padding in their feet. And the problems can snowball—what begins as achy feet can become knee and low back problems too.



Saving your feet

Those early twinges of pain should not be ignored—foot pain is not normal. Pain can be an early warning sign that unless your routine changes, a worse condition may arise. Fortunately, work-related feet and back problems can often successfully be treated with a few simple changes in habit. First, you should

make sure that you have comfortable shoes that fit well. Many foot problems are caused by poorly fitting shoes. In addition, padded insoles can often be used to ease foot pain.

With these simple measures, and some good sense, you can join the battle against foot and back pain and win.

The right shoes for the job

To realize the importance of good shoes to foot health one only needs to consider the impact of high heels on women's feet. Women are four times more likely than men to have foot problems, and high heels are often the cause.



The right shoes to wear depends on what you're doing all day. Office workers should rotate from three to five pairs of shoes for work. Men should wear general oxfords or loafers, and women should wear loafers or pumps. If you spend most of the day on your feet, it's important to have plenty of cushioning for your feet. Those in the service industry put a much greater

demand on their footwear. Their shoes should provide extra comfort along with proper inserts for the long hours of standing and walking.

Of course, no matter what you do, a good pair of work shoes must fit comfortably, with special allowances for freedom of the toes since toe problems can be caused by constrictive shoes.

“Those in the service industry put a much greater demand on their footwear.”

Remember these tips when shopping for shoes:

- *Your feet are larger in the afternoon than in the morning, so it's best to buy shoes later in the day.*
- *Make sure to have both feet measured (they may not be the same size), and buy for the larger foot.*
- *Select shoes that are flexible in the ball of the foot.*
- *Look for shoes with ample cushioning, especially in the heel. This can help with absorbing the harmful shock waves that can cause various foot problems.*

Shock therapy for feet

Choosing the right shoes is a good place to start if you want to avoid foot problems, but what if you already have problems? Common sense and medical research suggest several solutions including padding.

Footcare products for people at work

Much of the progress has been made in recent years in the area of footcare designed, high-performance products. Some are specifically for people with jobs that require prolonged standing or strenuous activity. These products are made with technically advanced materials and are designed using bio-mechanical engineering along with computer-aided design.



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