

## Foot injuries at work



**W**orkplace injuries to the feet and legs are common in jobs involving walking or standing for long periods, with foot and lower leg injuries accounting for approximately 20% of all workplace injuries. Most foot injuries occur in workers involved in manufacturing, construction, transport and storage, retail trade, and property and business services, and range from cuts, bruises and sprains from falling objects and trips and falls, through to overuse injuries such as sprains and stress fractures.

Common overuse among workers include repetitive strain injuries to the Achilles tendon, stress fractures through constant force applied to the feet, arch pain as arches can become flattened through long periods of standing and carrying weight, and heel pain. These problems can be avoided by wearing supportive shoes, changing position regularly and through proper foot care at home. If you are suffering from foot pain, we can recommend treatments to provide your feet with more support throughout the day and relieve any discomfort.

The importance of workplace-appropriate footwear shouldn't be ignored, and for many jobs, safety or protective shoes are mandatory for good reason. Any work that involves walking or standing for long periods of time is hard on the feet — with up to twice your body weight in force applied through your feet and legs with every step — and pain is common in the heel, balls of feet and arches as your feet are taking a lot of force over extended periods of time. Shoes that are properly fitted with comfortable inners, lower heels and good arch support are recommended to reduce discomfort and prevent injury. The APodC endorses Steel Blue work boots (pictured).

As well as wearing the right footwear, it's important to change position as often as possible to keep your muscles mobile and to give pressure points a rest. Keeping joints flexible by moving around is just as important as sitting down and having a rest at regular intervals. Make sure you change positions frequently so that any one particular muscle group isn't getting more strain than another.

Good foot care is recommended to ensure that your feet are as healthy as possible to avoid infection or injury. A lot of problems can be prevented through cleaning your feet regularly, inspecting for corns, calluses and cuts and getting them treated, and keeping nails trim while avoiding the potential for infection from ingrown toenails. Your feet are more susceptible to injury if you are on your feet all day, so looking after your feet will make your working life easier and pain free.



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