

52% of Adult
experience sore



Your Feet in the Workplace

by Robert P. (Bob) Thompson, CPed

Protecting your feet in the workplace is paramount. And if you are an amputee, be certain that you especially take steps to protect your remaining sound limb!

The Institute for Preventive Foot Health's (IPFH) 2012 National Foot Health Assessment study conducted by The NPD Group found that 52 percent of adult Americans – that's 115.4 million people – experience sore feet after working all day, and more than half of those respondents admitted that their sore feet have negatively impacted their job productivity! Because of their foot problems, 3 percent reported having missed at least one day of work, 1 percent missed more than a week at their jobs, and 2 percent were disabled for more than 30 days. According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), 63,180 ankle-

related injuries and 49,100 foot and toe injuries were reported, requiring a median of 8 and 7 days, respectively, of time off from work to recover. Lower-limb sprains, strains, fractures, bruises and contusions made up the bulk of those injuries. If there's any good news, it is that, statistically, very few lower-limb amputations result from industrial accidents.

Michael Shereff, MD, director of the Division of Foot and Ankle Surgery and professor in the Department of Orthopaedics & Sports Medicine at the University of Florida College of Medicine, has reported that, across all job and industry categories, lower-limb injuries increase in young and inexperienced workers (55 percent of injured employees are under 30 years old and 65 percent of employees have less than 5 years of work

Americans

feet after working all day



experience); injuries are most common on Mondays, decreasing throughout the rest of the week. Also, they increase before lunch and again in late afternoon.

Wherever you work – in an office, retail store, factory or on a construction site – the IPFH recommends using an integrated approach to the sizing and fitting of the shoes you wear to work: a padded sock (a clinically tested padded sock would be best); an insert for arch support and/or foot biomechanical correction if needed; and a shoe that fits around your foot/sock/insert with ample length, width and depth at the toe box, and with a low heel. Have *both* of your feet measured and size your shoes to the longer measurement. Shop late in the afternoon, when your feet are likely to be enlarged to their maximum size.

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Common Workplace Hazards and Injuries

HAZARD	INJURY
Falling and rolling objects →	Crushed or broken bones, amputations, cuts and punctures of legs, ankles, feet or toes
Chemicals, solvents →	Chemical burns, skin irritation, chemical exposure
Electrical current, high voltage →	Electrical shocks, fatal electrical exposure
Extreme cold →	Frostbite, permanent tissue damage or loss
Slips, trips and falls →	Back sprains, ankle sprains, broken bones, paralysis or other disabling injuries
Wet environments →	Slips and falls, back sprains, ankle sprains, strains, paralysis or other disabling injuries

In the manufacturing and construction industries, personal protective equipment (PPE) for the feet includes shoes with steel toes, non-metal plastic toes, metatarsal guards, slip-resistant, dielectric and conductive soles, cold environment, heat-resistant, chemical-resistant, blood-borne pathogen protection and fatigue-protection varieties. But no one shoe can handle all environmental circumstances. So be sure to assess your worksite and select a shoe that is

comfortable, durable, has an anti-slip sole and will appropriately protect you from the most significant hazards where you work. Work boots should fit snugly around the heel and ankle and high-top boots should be laced up fully to help stabilize and protect your ankle from injuries. And if you must stand for long periods of time at your job, gel insoles or an anti-fatigue ergonomic foot mat might be something you should consider using as well. 🌱

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