

# How can standing hazards at work be fixed or reduced?

## 1. Workstation design

Good design of jobs and workplaces can prevent or greatly reduce the hazards of standing a lot at work. A well-designed work area has:

- the choice to work sitting or standing at will (e.g., a sit/stand stool);
- a proper seat for resting if standing is required (Section 203(b) of Article 7 in New York State labor law requires it for women in many jobs);
- an adjustable-height work surface (if work surface is not adjustable, install a platform to raise a shorter worker and a pedestal to raise the work piece for a taller worker);
- room for workers to change body positions;
- a foot-rail or foot rest so standing workers can shift weight from one leg to the other;
- elbow supports for precision work; and
- a softly-padded kneeler in front of workers so they can kneel slightly forward while performing tasks in front of them.

## 2. Job design

Basic principles of good job design for standing work include:

- employers providing worker training (on proper work practices and use of rest breaks);
- job rotation among group of workers (moves workers from one job to another to shorten time standing);
- job enlargement to give workers more and varied tasks, to increase body positions and motions;
- design space so workers can avoid extreme bending, stretching and twisting;
- work that isn't too fast or slow; and
- allowance for frequent rest breaks.

Adapted from materials by the Ontario Workers' Health and Safety Centre. Anti-fatigue mat illustration from Washington State Dept. of Labor & Industries

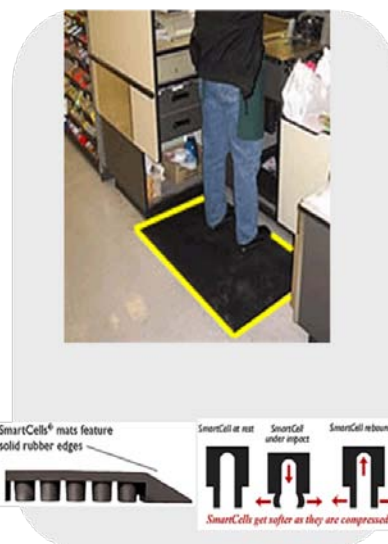


This European set-up includes a seat with a back, and room for the cashier's knees to fit under work surfaces.

## 3. Flooring

Materials that provide flexibility -- like wood, cork, carpeting, or rubber -- are gentler on our feet. Cover concrete or metal floors with anti-fatigue mats. They should have slanted edges to help prevent tripping. Avoid thick foam-rubber mats; too much cushioning can cause fatigue and increase the risk of tripping.

## 4. Anti-fatigue matting



Anti-fatigue matting can reduce foot discomfort and fatigue. It encourages leg and calf muscles to make small movements, so it's easier for blood to flow back to the heart. That helps to reduce feeling tired and discomfort in feet and legs. It does not replace a sit-stand stool or chair.

For more information, call Rick Sprout at the  
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