

Safety Note #69

CONTINUOUS STANDING PRACTICES



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Standing for extended periods of time may cause back strain and decrease the blood supply to the lower extremities resulting in muscle fatigue and soreness in the legs and feet. In addition, prolonged standing causes excessive pressure to accumulate at the heels and balls of the feet. Accumulated pressure can strain and cause inflammation of the connective tissue along the bottom of the foot (i.e., the plantar fascia). Inflammation of the plantar fascia can be very painful and is termed plantar fasciitis (pronounced fashee-eye-tiss). This Safety Note presents information about how to reduce the potential for incurring back, foot, and leg discomfort or injuries due to continuous standing.

Recommended Continuous Standing Practices

- Always wear shoes that are appropriate for continuous standing such as sturdy footwear that accommodates the shape of your foot and provides firm arch support and room for your toes to move.
- Wear shoes with laces that can be snugly tightened to prevent the foot from slipping in the shoe.
- Avoid standing continuously on hard floor surfaces (i.e., concrete floors). If a hard floor surface is unavoidable, use a rubber, vinyl, or carpet antifatigue mat for cushioning or shock-absorbing insoles inside shoes.
- Change working positions periodically to enhance the blood supply to the lower extremities and relieve muscle strain and swelling in the lower legs and feet.
- Use a footrest or footbar to alternatively shift the static body load from one leg and foot to the other leg and foot.
- Take periodic breaks or vary work tasks to relieve stress on the back, legs, and feet.
- Walking or the use of stretching exercises during break times or periodically throughout the work day provides relief to fatigued leg and back muscles or inflamed foot connective tissue.
- Assure the hand-work height is approximately at the elbow level to reduce back strain.
- Avoid overreaching or reaching above the shoulders.
- If you are experiencing severe back, leg, or foot pain or lower extremity swelling, notify your supervisor and seek medical advice.