Good Footwear Beats Sore Feet



When your feet hurt, everything hurts. Ask anyone finishing a long shift in bad shoes.

It is important to select footwear that is comfortable, safe and sturdy. Choose poorly and you suffer from discomfort, pain, fatigue and a range of foot problems including calluses, ingrown toenails and tired feet.

Consider the demands of your job, the conditions you work under and the risks associated with it. Your footwear will need to be comfortable, strong and protective.

Some workers need footwear that is specialized and unique: shoes that have anti-slip soles; are resistant to chemical spills or protect against sparks and burns; neoprene boots that keep out liquid; footwear with guards that protect toes from falling objects.

For many workers, such as those in healthcare, shoes that prevent slips on damp floors, provide cushioning when walking and standing hour after hour, and prevent biological contamination are required.

Key factors to consider when choosing foot protection:

- Footwear with ankle protection prevents sparks and burning particles from getting inside a worker’s shoes. Elastic makes it easy for workers to remove their shoes in an emergency.
- Waterproof footwear in wet conditions. Shoes and boots that protect against heat and cold.
- Footwear with good traction to prevent slips and falls. Some workers may need to wear cleats, or shoes with an abrasive, gritted, grooved, spiked or studded sole.
- Shoes made of rubber, PVC or neoprene protect against spills of oil, animal fat and chemicals. Select the proper material to protect against exposure from chemicals and other caustic materials.
- Footwear with guards protects feet against falling objects. The guards are made of steel, plastic or fiber and protect the top of the foot from falling objects.
- Protect the bottom of your feet from cuts, stabs and needle punctures. Shoes with reinforced soles made of a special flexible metal protect

against cuts and punctures from sharp objects such as needles, nails and broken glass.
- Workers exposed to electrical hazards need footwear with special soles to protect against shocks.
- Hygiene slippers and sandals are great for employees who shower before they leave work. Disposable footwear prevents the spread of infection.

For advice, or to check on footwear policies that may be in place in your department, speak to your supervisor.