



Ergonomics for Standing Workers

The Risks

Standing can make some tasks easier, although for long periods of time, this can lead to several problems. First, standing causes muscles to constrict, which reduces blood flow. This makes muscles and joints hurt, and it causes blood to stagnate. In addition, long term standing causes pronation, or excessive flattening of the foot. While this can be simply tiring and a bit painful, it can also lead to plantar fasciitis and other serious foot conditions. Lower back pain is highest in workers who stand at least 4 hours per day. Varicose veins and ankle ligament strain are also conditions which can be caused by prolonged standing on hard surfaces, which like others is distressing and can be irreversible.

Such conditions can begin unseen and maybe unnoticed, but can escalate to major issues both for the worker and the firm. Ill health caused by workplace neglect not only is physically painful for the worker, but can be the start of disputes between employee and employer, which can lead to large scale legal procedures and suing. It is clear the long term benefits outweigh the short term costs.

The Cause

Standing can make carrying out some tasks easier, although for long periods of time, this can lead to several problems. First, standing causes muscles to constrict, which reduces blood flow. This makes muscles and joints hurt, and it causes blood to stagnate. In addition, long term standing causes pronation, or excessive flattening of the foot. While this can be simply tiring and a bit painful, it can also lead to plantar fasciitis and other serious foot conditions. Lower back pain is highest in workers who stand at least 4 hours per day. Varicose veins and ankle ligament strain are also conditions which can be caused by prolonged standing on hard surfaces, which like others is distressing and can be irreversible.

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Recommendations

A well designed space will have space for movement. Work equipment should be easily accessible, without the need for twisting and bending. Standing comfort can be increased through the use of anti-fatigue matting on hard, cold floors.

Furniture should be height adjustable for personalisation. Work benches should be set at differing heights for work types.

- Precision work – around 2 inches above elbow height.
- Light work – around 2 – 4 inches below elbow height.
- Heavy work – from 8 – 16 inches below elbow height.

Points to Remember

Do's	Dont's
Adjust furniture to suit you	Reach high above you to work
Work close to your body, avoid stretching	Wear unsuitable shoes without support
Rest when possible	Work on slippery floors
Do wear supportive footwear suitable to your task	Stand on cold, hard floors without covering
Keep working areas hazard free	
Use floor matting to reduce impact	

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Work Comfortably**

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