

Foot injuries can be financially crippling: protect your feet at work.

Did you know that one in five injuries in the workplace affects the lower limbs including the feet and toes? Stringent rules demand safety footwear in the workplace. In addition, by following a few simple guidelines, you can help to reduce foot problems in the workplace. It's in your interests to do so.

EMPLOYERS

As an employer you can prevent foot problems at work:

- Ensure the right footwear is used for the right job. There are many brands, designs and types of safety footwear available. Ask the manufacturer or supplier to advise on the correct footwear for use.
- Comfortable safety footwear increases productivity and creates a happier work place.
- Have your employee try on the footwear to make sure the shoe or boot is the correct size and fits comfortably. Good quality safety footwear should not be uncomfortable if correctly fitted.
- Promote foot health in your workplace, especially during Foot Health Week (mid-October).
- Contract a podiatrist to give a talk on foot care to employees.
- Encourage your staff members to report foot problems, however minor (e.g. safety shoes that rub).
- Look at the foot health record of your company - multiple foot complaints may suggest the workplace itself is creating foot problems.
- Do a 'Foot Risk Assessment' in the workplace - look for ways to minimise the burden on your employees' feet. (A podiatrist may be able to assist you with assessing workplace foot risks).
- Emphasise to the safety officer or occupational physician that foot complaints should be taken seriously.
- If your employees wear safety shoes, ask yourself: Do we stock an adequate range of safety shoes to suit every staff member? If not, out-sourcing the supply and fit of safety shoes may be more cost-effective.
- Allow employees a crossover period when they exchange their old safety shoes for a new pair.

This message is brought to you by Steel Blue and the Australasian Podiatry Council in the interests of better foot health.



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WORKPLACE FOOT CARE

EMPLOYEES

As an employee, you can maintain your foot health. Here's how:

- Wear good quality work socks and change them every day.
- Ensure your safety footwear is comfortable. Good quality, well-fitted safety footwear should not be uncomfortable and will need very little breaking-in time.
- Recognise that comfortable safety footwear will reduce fatigue and keep you fresher and alert longer.
- Be aware of the hazards in your workplace. If you have concerns about foot safety, alert your employer or safety officer.
- Make sure your shoes fit properly and that you wear appropriate shoes for your workplace (e.g. safety shoes if applicable).
- Remember, feet shouldn't hurt. Sore feet are a sign of a problem.
- Visit a podiatrist if you have foot problems.

Your podiatrist

Podiatrists are highly skilled health professionals trained to help prevent, diagnose, treat and rehabilitate medical and surgical conditions of the feet and lower limbs. Podiatrists have completed a Bachelor of Podiatry or higher degree and continually upgrade their skills and knowledge through further education and training.

Where can I find a podiatrist?

To find a podiatrist, go online to www.findapodiatrist.org More information about foot care is available at www.feet.org.au In Australia, refer to your Yellow Pages for podiatrists in your area or contact the Australian Podiatry Association in your state. In New Zealand, contact Podiatry New Zealand Inc.

Are you covered?

Many health funds in Australia provide cover for podiatry services on their ancillary tables and government funded services are available through the Department of Veterans' Affairs, some public hospitals and community health centres. In New Zealand, some podiatry services may be partly or fully covered by the Accident Compensation Corporation.

**This information is not to be used as a substitute for podiatric or medical assistance.*

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