

West Coast Foot & Ankle

Associates Inc

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FOOT HEALTH ON THE JOB

Protect Your Feet

Your ability to use your feet safely, with ease and comfort, is vital if you are to remain a valuable and productive worker.

When your job requires you to stand on your feet for long periods, work in potentially hazardous areas or with potentially hazardous materials, you have some risk of foot injury. However, you can do a lot to prevent injuries by keeping your feet healthy and following safe work practices.

In any given year, there are about 120,000 job-related foot injuries, one-third of them toe injuries, according to the National Safety Council. You can't take your feet for granted! And your concern for them cannot be divided; it should continue off the job, as well as at work.

Off-the-Job

There are a few simple things you should do:

- Bathe your feet daily; dry them thoroughly.
- Check your feet frequently for corns, calluses, cracks.
- Keep your feet warm.
- Trim your toenails straight across, slightly longer than the end of the toe.
- Prevent foot problems by visiting your podiatrist as part of your annual health check-up.
- Wear protective footwear when using lawnmowers, chain-saws, and moving heavy objects.

On-the-Job

- It is important for you to develop safe work habits and attitudes. Some things to remember:
 - Be aware of the hazards of your job and the proper protective measures to take.
 - Don't take chances or unnecessary risks. Take time to do your job right.
 - Be alert. Watch for hidden hazards.
 - Be considerate. Watch out for other workers' safety.
 - Follow the rules. Don't cut corners. Use your equipment as specified.
 - Concentrate on the job. Inattention can lead to accidents.
 - Pace yourself. Work steadily at a comfortable speed.
 - Keep your work area clean and your tools in their place.

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Protective Footwear Is Essential

Safety shoes and boots protect your feet, help prevent injuries to them, and reduce the severity of injuries that do occur in the workplace.

Only one out of four victims of job-related foot injury wear any type of safety shoe or boot, according to the National Safety Council. The remaining three either are unaware of the benefits of protective footwear or complain about it.

Safety footwear is comfortable, flexible, stylish, and still provides protection from injury.

The foot is the most valuable part of your body subjected to injury in industry. Because of the many potential work hazards, it is important that you discuss with your supervisor the safety shoe, boot, or other protective equipment that you need for your protection.

HAZARD: *falling and rolling objects, cuts and punctures*

PROTECTION: steel-toe safety shoes; add-on devices: metatarsal guards, metal foot guards, puncture-proof inserts, shin guards

HAZARD: *chemicals, solvents*

PROTECTION: footwear with synthetic stitching, and made of rubber, vinyl or plastic

HAZARD: *electric current*

PROTECTION: shoes or boots with rubber soles, and heels, no metal parts and insulated steel toes

HAZARD: *extreme cold*

PROTECTION: shoes or boots with moisture- or oil-resistant insulation, and that can repel water (if this is a problem); insulated socks

HAZARD: *extreme heat and direct flame*

PROTECTION: overshoes or boots of fire-resistant materials with wooden soles

HAZARD: *high voltage*

PROTECTION: shoes with rubber or cork heels and soles, and no exposed metal parts

HAZARD: *hot surfaces*

PROTECTION: safety shoes with wooden or other heat-resistant soles; wooden sandals overshoes

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HAZARD: *sanitation contamination*

PROTECTION: special plastic booties or overshoes; paper or wood shower sandals

HAZARD: *slips and skids (from wet, oily shoes with wooden soles or cleated, surfaces)*

PROTECTION: non-slip rubber or neoprene soles; non-skid sandals that slip over shoes; strap-on cleats for icy surfaces

HAZARD: *sparking (from metal shoe parts)*

PROTECTION: safety shoes with no metal parts and non-sparking material

HAZARD: *sparks, molten metal splashes*

PROTECTION: foundry boots with elastic sides or (that get inside shoes) quick-release buckles for speedy removal

HAZARD: *static electricity*

PROTECTION: shoes or boots with heels and soles of cork or leather

HAZARD: *wetness*

PROTECTION: lined rubber shoes or boots; rubbers or shoes of silicone-treated leather

If Your Feet are Injured at Work

Report any injury to your foreman or supervisor promptly for necessary first aid. Then see your podiatrist if further treatment is recommended. Proper foot care improves your efficiency and keeps you on the job.

Your podiatrist is a specialist who diagnoses and treats foot disorders and injuries medically and surgically. By visiting your podiatrist regularly, you can insure for yourself a lifetime of pain-free feet.

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