



Factsheet

My Healthy WorkSpace – Standing Well

If you need to stand to perform your work, you must do it safely.

A wide range of professions and occupations require workers to stand for prolonged periods of time. If you find yourself or a colleague in a job that involves continuous standing for over an hour without shifting, or lasting more than four hours per shift, it's crucial to manage how to stand correctly. Neglecting these aspects could potentially lead to chronic conditions including lower and middle back pain.

What professions and occupations require standing for long periods of time?

Many professions and occupations require standing for the majority of their work day including those who work in healthcare, aged care, dentistry, hairdressing, customer service, retail, manufacturing, hospitality, entertainment, travel, security, floristry, teaching, traffic and crowd control, and first responders.

What impact could prolonged standing have on the health of workers?

Prolonged standing requires considerable muscular effort and physical exertion, and if not managed correctly, poor posture can impact workers' physically and psychologically. Potential health issues caused through prolonged standing include neck and shoulder stiffness, low and mid back pain and discomfort, swelling in the legs, leg pain and cramps, circulation issues, low blood pressure, varicose veins, joint problems including ankle, knees and hips, foot problems, muscular fatigue and tiredness.

People who stand for more than **four hours** every day are at higher risk of developing low back pain.

How to maintain a healthy spine and overall health and wellbeing when standing at work?

With prevention the best protection against all workspace injuries, for workers who are required to stand for long periods, follow some simple steps to help minimise the impact on your spinal health.

Maintain good posture

Good posture is imperative to keep bones and joints aligned, decrease stress on spinal ligaments and prevent muscle strain that can lead to back, joint and muscular pain.

- Stand tall and relaxed with your back straight and shoulders back.
- Lightly tuck in your abdomen.
- Try to find the upright 'position of ease' – don't be too rigid.

Avoid long periods of looking down

- Keep your head up, tuck in your chin, and face straight ahead.
- Don't stand looking down at your phone. It can cause stress on the neck and cervical spine and lead to tech neck. Hold your phone in front of you so it's aligned with your shoulders.



Take a balanced approach to standing at work

- Stand evenly on both feet.
- Feet should be shoulder-width apart.
- Regularly shift body weight from toes to heels and from one foot to the other.
- Avoid locking the knees.
- Relax the hands and arms so they are positioned naturally at your sides.

Wear appropriate footwear

- Wear sensible, comfortable shoes appropriate to the task – forget high heels!
- Shoes should be wide enough to leave room to move the toes to help prevent pain and fatigue.
- Choose shoes with arch support to prevent flattening of the feet.
- Ensure the heels have a secure grip to prevent slipping.
- Wear shoes where the inner sole is the full length of the shoe from heel to toe.
- Inner soles, inlays or specialised orthotics can help realign the body to reduce stress.

Warm up before work

- Make it a habit to do some gentle exercises and stretches before starting work each day.
- Calf and leg stretches, squats and heel raises can help improve blood circulation and strengthen and maintain lower limbs.

Good habits can help maintain spinal health

- Alternate standing with moving and sitting every 30 minutes and where possible, take regular walks.
- Avoid overreaching behind or above the shoulder line, or beyond the point of what is comfortable.

How can employers help minimise workspace injuries from prolonged standing?

In Australia, employers have a responsibility to keep workers safe from the risks of excessive standing. To help prevent health risks from prolonged standing, employers should allow for workers to vary their posture and movements alternating between sitting, standing and walking at regular intervals. Where possible the use of anti-fatigue floor mats to provide suitable cushioning on concrete and other hard floors.

How can consulting an ACA chiropractor help?

Intervention is the best protection against all workspace injuries. To help prevent injuries caused by prolonged standing, consult an ACA chiropractor who can assess your overall spinal health and provide advice on postural correctness, stretches and exercises to improve flexibility, mobility and overall spinal health. And if you have experienced a workspace injury or pain in the lower or mid back, neck or shoulders, consult a chiro for low-risk, drug-free, personalised chiropractic healthcare and help improve your spinal health and overall wellbeing.

If your work also involves lifting and bending, download the additional Factsheets from spinalhealth.org.au

Spinal Health Month is the Australian Chiropractors Association's flagship campaign aimed at educating Australians about the importance of maintaining positive spinal health. Look for the ACA Member logo at your local chiropractor or to locate an ACA chiropractor near you, visit

consultachiro.org.au

For a full list of references, visit chiro.org.au/references