



## 5 Ways to Avoid Spreading Illness

With the changing weather, the potential for contracting a cold or the flu increases substantially. Read on to learn how to avoid spreading these illnesses.

## The Dangers of Prolonged Standing

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A monthly safety newsletter from

# 5 Ways to Avoid Spreading Illness

With the changing weather, the potential for contracting a cold or the flu increases substantially.

The flu is an infection of the nose, throat and lungs caused by the influenza virus—with symptoms like fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue, loss of appetite, and a runny or stuffy nose.

While the common cold and the seasonal flu share many of the same symptoms, colds are often characterized by mild headaches and body aches. Unlike the flu, colds don't usually require a trip to the doctor and can often be treated simply by using over-the-counter medications.

While colds and the flu aren't generally a concern for individuals in good health, they can be dangerous for the elderly and those with pre-existing conditions like asthma. So, while you may be able to handle these illnesses, co-workers, friends, family members or those you come into contact with may not.

As such, it's important to protect yourself from contracting a cold or the flu altogether in order to prevent the spread of the disease. The following are just a few strategies you can use to keep yourself and those you interact with safe and healthy:

1. **Get vaccinated during flu season.** This is often cited as the best way to prevent contracting or spreading the disease. Health officials recommend that everyone older than 6 months get a flu vaccine each year.
2. **Stay home if you feel ill.** Not only does rest help your body recover from colds and the flu, but staying home can help prevent spreading the illness.
3. **Wash your hands.** Using soap and water to wash your hands is critical when preventing the spread of illness. This should be done often and especially after using the restroom or prior to eating.
4. **Avoid others.** If you're ill, be smart and avoid shaking hands or coming into contact with your co-workers.
5. **Be mindful of where you cough.** By coughing and sneezing into your arm and not your hand, you are limiting your chances of spreading your germs to others.

If you do catch a more serious cold or the flu, it may be a good idea to see a doctor and to discuss treatment options.

**According to the World Health Organization (WHO), influenza contributes to about 250,000 to 500,000 deaths each year.**

## The Dangers of Prolonged Standing

Prolonged standing is a common requirement for certain employees, including salespeople, machine operators and assembly-line workers. And, while standing is a natural human activity, it can lead to serious health issues if performed in excess.

Most often, prolonged standing contributes to sore feet, leg swelling, varicose veins, general muscular fatigue, lower back pain, and neck and shoulder stiffness.

This is because keeping the body upright for long periods of time requires substantial muscular effort. Additionally, when you stand, you are effectively reducing the supply of blood to strained muscles.

If standing at length is a requirement of your job, it's critical to know some preventive tactics that can help reduce the risk of injury. The following are eight strategies you can implement today in order to work in a standing position safely:

1. Change your working position often, shifting your weight to help reduce the time spent straining one muscle group.
2. Avoid sudden or drastic movements,

such as bending and twisting, whenever possible.

3. Pace yourself so that you do not overexert yourself as you work.
4. Take breaks often in order to rest your muscles. It may also be a good idea to stretch during this time.
5. Adjust tables or workstations in a way that is comfortable for your style of work.
6. Keep your workstation clean and organized so there's room to move around and so you don't have to reach for important items.
7. Wear comfortable shoes and utilize anti-fatigue mats. These can help reduce the strain on your feet and legs.
8. Sit down whenever possible in order to give your entire body a rest.

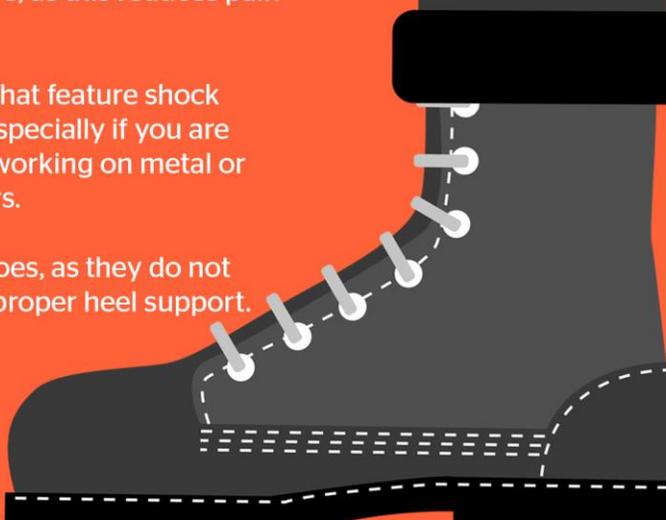
If you're still concerned about prolonged standing, consult your manager. He or she can offer you additional training and suggestions for workplace design improvements.



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Shoe choice can impact standing fatigue and your overall comfort. When choosing a pair of shoes, consider the following:

1. Wear shoes with a firm heel grip; this helps with stability.
2. Wear shoes that give your toes room to move, as this reduces pain and fatigue.
3. Wear shoes that feature shock absorbers, especially if you are going to be working on metal or cement floors.
4. Avoid flat shoes, as they do not provide the proper heel support.



## Real-life Case Study

Matt is an assembly-line worker at an Atlanta-based factory. He spends the majority of his day on his feet, inspecting products and ensuring they meet company standards.

Lately, Matt had been experiencing sore feet and swollen legs as the result of prolonged standing.

It had gotten so bad that the pain was affecting his daily work, and he was unable to perform basic tasks that were assigned to him.

After consulting with his manager, Matt was instructed to utilize anti-fatigue mats and shock-absorbent footwear to lessen the strain on his legs.

Additionally, Matt was given a new work station that better accommodated his height and movements. His manager even allowed him to use a chair during breaks.

And, because Matt approached his manager with his concerns, mandatory stretching periods were added to the schedule for all assembly-line workers.