

Veterinary Insurance Program



Veterinary Loss Prevention Program

Prolonged Standing in the Veterinary Setting

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Trainer's Overview

To have your employees get the most out of their training sessions, it is suggested that:

- The training sessions should be conducted in a relatively quiet and uninterrupted environment.
- The sessions should be held the same time and day of the month (e.g., first Tuesday at 12:30).
- Employee handouts should be given out along with writing utensils.
- The trainers guide, employee handout and any references are reviewed.
- The sessions are kept to a maximum of 20 minutes.
- Personal examples of incidents or prevention techniques that worked for you should be included.
- All employees present will sign the safety training sign-in sheet for documentation purposes.
- If some employees were not present, then a second training session should be given.

The Employee Health & Safety exposures and loss prevention efforts are the responsibility of your company. These services are intended to assist you and your management in evaluating potential exposures to loss and methods to minimize exposure. These services do not necessarily include every possible loss potential, code violation, or exception to good management practice.

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Trainer's Guide

Overview

Standing is a natural human posture and by itself poses no particular health hazard. However, standing for prolonged periods of time can be problematic. This is especially true when standing on hard surfaces, wearing inappropriate shoes, and/or the absence of appropriate engineering and administrative controls.

The most frequent health related problems seen in the veterinary setting include sore feet, swelling of the legs, general muscular fatigue, low back pain, and stiffness of the neck and shoulders. Over time, varicose veins and more serious orthopedic and neurological medical conditions may occur. Of particular concern in the surgical setting is to have fine motor skills diminish when standing in a stationary position for extended periods of time.

A person's body is also affected by the overall arrangement of the work area relative to the tasks they will perform. Placement of medical equipment, supplies, and device controls will ultimately determine the body positions a person can assume while performing the specified activity. A poorly designed/arranged work area will significantly limit the number of body positions to choose from, therefore creating a more rigid working environment. This lack of body position flexibility also significantly contributes to the multiple health problems associated with prolonged standing.

Keeping the body in an upright position for extended periods of time requires considerable muscular effort and is particularly unhealthy even when the person is simply standing still. Blood supply to the loaded muscles is effectively reduced. Insufficient blood flow accelerates the onset of fatigue and causes muscle pain in the legs, back, and neck.

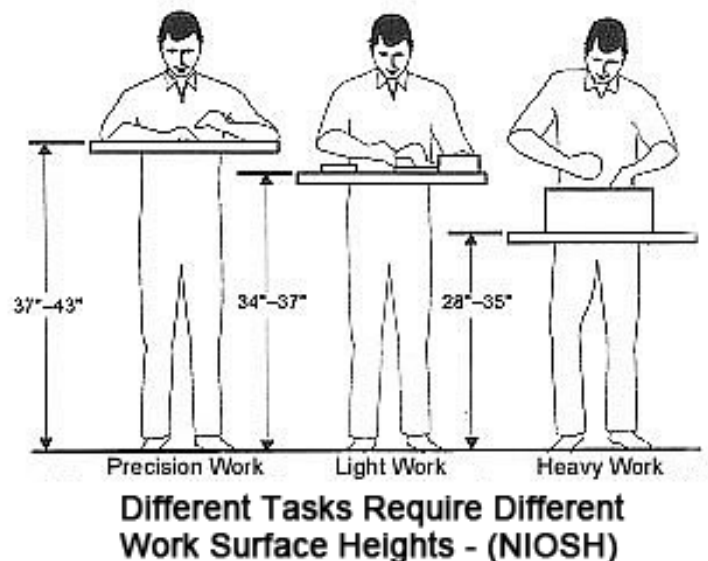
Engineering Controls

In a well-designed workplace, the worker has the opportunity to choose from among a variety of well-balanced working positions and to change between them frequently. Examination tables, operating tables, and stools should be adjustable. Being able to adjust the working height is particularly important to match the workstation to the worker's individual body size and to the worker's particular task. If the workstation cannot be adjusted, platforms to raise the shorter worker or pedestals on top of workstations for the tall worker should be considered.

Workplace design should fit the variety of workers' shapes and sizes, and provide support for the completion of different tasks.

Different tasks require different work surface heights:

- Precision work, such as writing or surgery, should be level to 3" above elbow height.
- Light work, such as performing laboratory tests or cleaning and preparing surgical equipment, should be 2-4" below elbow height.
- Heavy work, demanding downward forces, should be 8-16" below elbow height.



Administrative Controls

Organization of the work space is another important aspect. There should be enough room to move from one leg to the other. Controls and tools should be positioned so the worker can reach them easily and without twisting or bending.

Where possible, an adjustable stool should be provided so that the worker can do the job either sitting or standing. The seat must place the worker at a height that suits the type of work being done. Seats at the workplace expand the variety of possible body positions and give the worker more flexibility.

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Trainer's Guide (continued)

20 & 2: Every 20 minutes take a posture break and move for 2 minutes. Simply standing is insufficient. This is particularly important when performing long or multiple surgical procedures.

Movement is important to get blood circulation through the muscles - and movement is FREE! Research shows that you don't need to do vigorous exercise to get the benefits, just walking around is sufficient. Build in a pattern of creating greater variety of movement in the workplace, e.g., walk to the printer or water fountain, take the stairs, walk around the floor, park a bit further away from the building each day, etc.

Changes in working/standing position: Work should be organized so that the worker has some choice about his/her working position and an opportunity to change position frequently. A workplace that includes an optional seat (chair, sit/stand stool) and some kind of footrest increases the variety of body positions and encourages frequent changes between them.



Footwear

The proper choice of footwear is an important consideration for persons who work on their feet as it reduces the effects of prolonged standing. Shoes should ensure adequate arch and heel support along with cushioning while providing comfort to the wearer.

Flooring

The type of flooring used in the workplace has an equally important influence on comfort, especially on tender feet. In the veterinary setting, the flooring must be extremely durable and cleanable, and many are tile/linoleum on concrete. Some areas might be conducive to anti-fatigue mats. When considering the use of these anti-fatigue mats, there are other factors that should be considered, such as allowing changes in working/standing position, footwear, and flooring.

“Do”

- Do consider that your feet can only be as comfortable as the footwear permits.
- Do wear shoes that won't change the shape of your foot.
- Do choose shoes that provide a firm grip for the heel. If the back of the shoe is too wide or too soft, the shoe will slip causing instability and soreness.
- Do wear shoes that allow freedom to move your toes. Pain and fatigue result if shoes are too narrow or too shallow.
- Do ensure that shoes have arch supports; lack of arch support causes foot flattening.
- Do wear shoes with lace-up fastenings.
- Do tighten the lace instead of your footwear firmly. The foot is prevented from slipping inside the footwear.
- Do use padding under the tongue if you suffer from tenderness over the bones at the top of the foot.
- Do use a shock-absorbing cushioned insole when working on metal or cement floors.
- Do choose footwear according to the hazard at your workplace.
- Do select footwear taking into account individual fit and comfort. Try them on and walk around for a few moments before buying.
- Do consider wearing compression socks to aid in circulation.

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Trainer's Guide (continued)

"Don't"

- Don't wear flat shoes – avoid shoes without any heel lift.
- Don't wear shoes with extreme heels – avoid shoes with heels higher than 2".

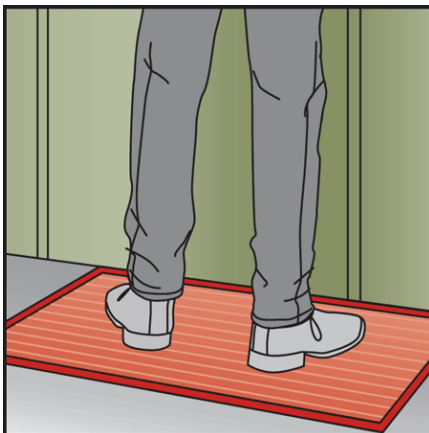


Questions for Discussion

- Q: What is the health risk associated with standing work?
A: Standing work can cause or contribute to sore feet, swelling of the legs, varicose veins, general muscular fatigue, low back pain, stiffness in the neck and shoulders.
- Q: How are fine motor skills impacted by standing work?
A: Fine motor skills are diminished.
- Q: Name one Engineering control?
A: Adjustable examination tables, operating tables, and stools.
- Q: Name one Administrative control?
A: Management encourages greater workplace flexibility enabling a variety of body positions.
- Q: What is 20 & 2?
A: Every 20 minutes move for 2 minutes.

Workplace Floor Recommendations

- Keep work areas clean.
- Ensure that the floors are level and non-slippery.
- Cover hard floor surfaces with anti-fatigue mats where appropriate. Slanted edges on mats help prevent tripping.
- Do not use thick foam-rubber mats. Too much cushioning can cause fatigue and increase the hazard of tripping.



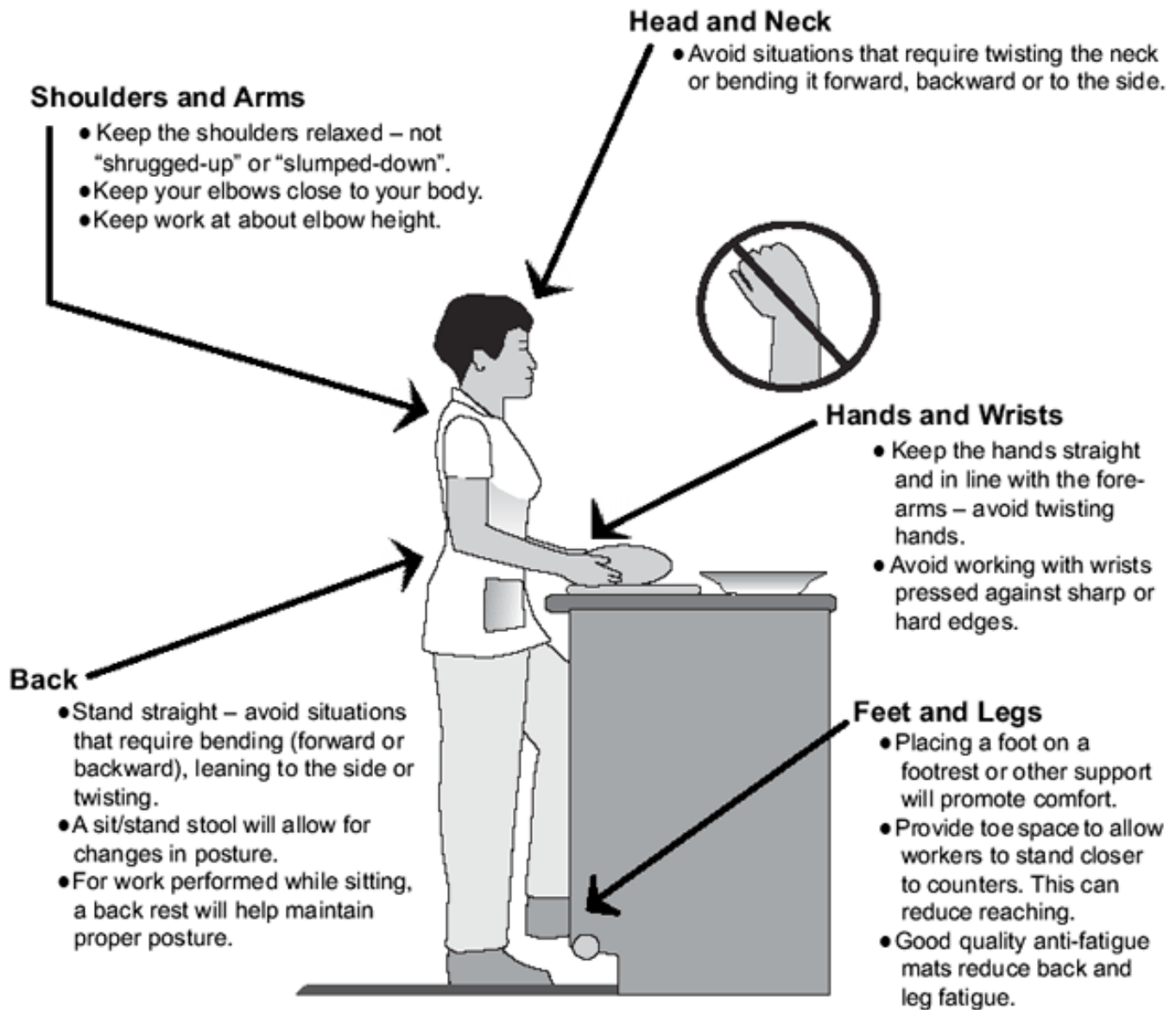
Other questions?



Please complete the Sign-in sheet

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Ergonomics Diagram



The Basics of Neutral Working Postures

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Employee Handout

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The most frequent health related problems seen in the veterinary setting include sore feet, swelling of the legs, general muscular fatigue, low back pain, and stiffness of the neck and shoulders. Over time, varicose veins and more serious orthopedic and neurological medical conditions may occur. Of particular concern in the surgical setting is to have fine motor skills diminish when standing in a stationary position for extended periods of time.

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- Do use a shock-absorbing cushioned insole when working on metal or cement floors.
- Do choose footwear according to the hazard at your workplace.
- Do select safety footwear, if required, that is CSA approved and carries the proper ratings for the hazard.
- Do select footwear taking into account individual fit and comfort. Try them on and walk around for a few moments before buying.

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