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Standing Ovation: Floor Mats Deliver Comfort, Improved Air Quality, and Safety

Posted by Jay in [Health Articles](#), [Safety Articles](#) on 08 Feb, 2010 | [one response](#)

As a means for paying for my robust monthly bar tab while a college student, I landed a job stringing tennis racquets at a sporting goods store. It was well paying, I received a generous discount on sporting goods, and I learned a skill that, like calculus, would serve no purpose once I finished school.

For eight hours every Sunday and four hours at a time during weeknights, I would stand on a cement floor in the store's warehouse stringing racquets, listening to the grumblings of other college-aged employees while daydreaming about being anywhere else.

After just a few weeks, I began experiencing nearly debilitating lower back and knee pain, which an orthopedic surgeon traced to my uninterrupted sessions standing on the store's cement floor. His prescription: a padded, anti-fatigue mat (not to ingest, mind you, but as a cushion to be placed on the unforgiving floor while I worked).

Within a week, the mat had lived up to its anti-fatigue billing, and I was stringing Prince, Kennex, and Head racquets without any physical discomfort, an enlightening OSHA-like moment. And it made me keenly aware of how modest investments can go a long way in improving the workplace environment.

Whatever your industry—industrial, retail, food and beverage, or general office—a floor mat is a valuable tool whose health, safety, and hygiene benefits extend far beyond its modest cost.

Anti-Fatigue: Rooted in Science

The benefits of anti-fatigue mats are well documented and confirmed by scientific research.

A University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee [study](#) by its Department of Occupational Therapy concluded that modifying flooring with a floor mat successfully alleviates pain and discomfort associated with long periods of standing. And the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) noted that anti-fatigue mats "[decrease foot weariness](#)" for employees who stand in one position for long periods.

As for implementation, you should install anti-fatigue mats in any work situation requiring employees to stand in one position for long periods of time. Not only will they make your workplace more comfortable, but their implementation may entitle your company to an insurance discount, as the measure helps prevent workplace injuries.

Additional benefits include:

- (1) Reduced breakage. Especially in foodservice environments, padded floor mats reduce breakage from dishes and glass objects that are accidentally dropped.
- (2) Improved employee morale. A more comfortable workplace is a happier workplace.
- (3) Improved productivity: Comfortable employees work more productively, adding to your company's bottom-line.
- (4) Reduced slip-and-fall injuries. Falling on a cushioned mat rather than a hard floor is less likely to result in physical injury. Additionally, a mat can add much-needed friction to smooth, well-polished floors, reducing the risk of slipping in the first place.

Entryway Mats: Essential Dirt Barriers

Mats placed at entryways serve a crucial filtering function in preventing dirt tracked from outside from being carried into the workplace.

Researchers at Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health used commercial floor mats to assess lead in residential dust in inner-city houses, [reporting](#) that the mats "were found to be a feasible method for the collection of dust that has accumulated for a known amount of time."

The United States Environmental Protection Agency [cautions](#) against carrying lead dust indoors, a health risk that the agency says is a common issue around construction sites and factories. As such, it recommends a floor mat where shoes can be wiped. It's a strategy with which a notable child care expert also agrees, who advises using a floor mat at entrances to improve your facility's indoor air quality by making it [cleaner](#).

Spreading the Word

In addition to their practical health and safety benefits, mats can also serve as a subtle promotional tool for your company. U-Need-It [can customize](#) many of its mats with your company's name, logo, or even tagline, a strategic way to reinforce your brand among your employees and customers.

Whatever your industry, mats are a cost-effective way at improving your company's workplace while extending the visibility of your brand.