

## Don't overlook the floor when it comes to workshop maintenance

Keeping your workshop well maintained not only ensures that all your machinery is running at its best, but it also reduces the chance of accidents happening. A poorly maintained workshop is a haven for trip and fall hazards, not to mention the abundance of accidents that could occur from the use of poorly maintained tools and equipment.

One area that is consistently overlooked when thinking about workshop maintenance however, is the floor. We often forget about just how much wear and tear the floor covering in the workshop accumulate but a poorly maintained flooring can cause a wealth of problems.

Slips, trips and falls account for the largest percentage of workshop accidents and they can cause a range of injuries from minor bumps and bruises to more serious back and even head injuries. If an employee or a visitor to your workshop was to trip over a loose floor mat or hole in your flooring due to poor maintenance then you may find yourself liable for any compensation they may seek.

To ensure that your workshop is a safe environment, and to also help ensure the comfort of yourself and any staff while working in the premises, floor mats should be replaced regularly. However, not all floor mats were created equal and so there are some things you may want to consider when choosing your replacements.

### The benefits of floor mats

You may be tempted to just throw out any used and damaged floor mats and not bother with the cost of replacing them but it is important to remember the many benefits of floor mats in the workshop. One of the biggest benefits to having mats in your premises is that they have been shown to reduce the likelihood of accidents happening within the workspace. Having suitable mats down on your floor can cut the chance of slipping on spilt water, grease or oil and properly maintaining and replacing the mats will also further reduce the risk of trips.

Other benefits of matting are that it can reduce fatigue and pain in the legs and as a result, increase productivity. When you are stood for long periods of time in one place, the blood builds up in the feet and lower legs causing painful joints and swelling. Anti-fatigue mats create a small amount of instability, causing the leg muscles to make constant micro-adjustments whilst balance is maintained. This keeps blood flowing and reduces muscle fatigue. The follow-on impact of this will see a boost in productivity, fewer employee sick days and an all-around increase in staff morale.

### Different styles for different jobs

If you are replacing your floor mats, then it is vital that you invest in a style of matting which is suitable for the environment in which you are using it as certain styles have been designed to work best in specific working areas. For example, the ring "swarf mat" is ideal for industrial workshops as it has been designed specifically to catch machining debris and to scrape it from the bottom of shoes. The ringed design traps machining debris under the mat so that it is easily swept away at the end of the day when the mat is lifted away

Other styles of floor mat include ones designed to be used in "wet" areas where there is a high likelihood of fluid being spilled on the floor such as water or grease. These mats will have textured or raised surfaces and drainage holes which will ensure that water does not permeate or pool on them, reducing the risk of slipping.

Anti-fatigue mats which are not designed for wet areas usually come in the widest range of styles, such as bubble top and fluted. The different styles offer different feelings and benefits underfoot but

a specialised anti-fatigue mat supplier will be able to discuss your specific needs with you and point you in the direction of the most suitable mat for your workshop depending on the type of work and industry that you are in.

### The Right Matting for Oily Floors

Most industrial mats that are available on the market are made from rubber due to its naturally hard-wearing and high grip properties. However, mats made from rubber are not the best type to use around oily areas and if you are experiencing mats falling apart or breaking down quicker than you would have expected in some areas of your workshop then you may need to reconsider the material of the mats you are purchasing. Mats which are to be used in oily and greasy areas should be made from a higher concentrate of Nitrile rubber as this will not break down so easily.

Other materials to avoid in wet areas are anti-fatigue mats made from a foam, as although they may be ideal in an office environment for reducing fatigue, they will soak up any liquid and break apart and distort quickly. Similarly, foam mats should be avoided in areas where wheels are going to be rolled over them as they will quickly chew up the foam and cause a trip hazard.

Contact an industrial flooring mat specialist to find out more about changing and maintaining your workshop floor mats as choosing the right mats the first time can save you a small fortune in the long run.

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