



## The Basic Differences in Selecting Mats

Choosing the correct mat can be quite daunting. Matting is typically designed to help prevent accidents (slipping) and to increase comfort when standing on your feet all day (depending on the situation). Here are the main categories:

### 1) Entrance Mats

An entrance mat is normally designed to absorb soil and water along with keeping it from spreading into the building. Some entrance mats also act as a “scraper” to get some of the mud or snow off your shoes before proceeding. It is suggested that at least 15 feet of matting is required to remove the majority of dirt and debris from foot traffic. The idea is that 15 feet allows each foot to make contact with the mat three times, allowing adequate scraping and drying time to keep most of the dirt/moisture from being tracked further into the building (and on the nice floors!).

### 2) Anti-Slip Mats

These would be selected based on the type of work that is being performed. Anti-slip mats normally have some “anti-fatigue” qualities and some anti-fatigue mats will still have some “anti-slip” qualities, so there has to be a better way to define this category. Traditionally, most anti-slip matting has holes in it. This is to allow liquid (water, chemicals, machine oil) to drain through the mat or to allow dust and particles to fall through the mat, making the mat less slippery to the employee. Also, these mats never have any exposed “foam” so that liquids cannot penetrate the mat when sitting in a wet environment. Food processing facilities will commonly use these, as they are fairly easy to clean and disinfect.

### 3) Anti-Fatigue Mats

Anti-fatigue mats are the most common type of matting requested by our customers. These mats typically work well for workers who are on hard surfaces (concrete) for most of the day. A good mat in this category will add to better productivity and less chance of back and leg fatigue (which can be a source of injury to employees). Standing for long periods reduces the natural flow of oxygen and blood back to the heart, which can cause fatigue and blood pooling in lower extremities. Selecting matting in this category can be a challenge! Here are some things to consider:

- 1) Size – Mats come in a few standard sizes (2' x 3', 3' x 5, runners, etc.), however we can easily custom-make various sizes, shapes, and lengths to meet your needs.
- 2) Color – While black is quite common, many customers like the yellow borders to help prevent tripping hazards (even though most mats have beveled edges) – also, color might be an indication of the mats' oil-resistant characteristics or other attributes.
- 3) Thickness – Generally speaking, thicker mats cost more, give better anti-fatigue properties, and simply last longer – the trick is trying to find the best match your needs
- 4) Foam Density – The quality and density of the foam is what can really differentiate between how well a mat provides comfort to the employee. If a mat is a very low density (extremely soft), it can actually cause more fatigue to the worker and not last as long. Very high density foam mats might simply not be comfortable enough to the worker. The key is finding the right blend (and quality!).
- 5) Material – What is the anti-fatigue mat made out of? They are not always some type of foam (or might be a couple layers of different materials). You can have mats with a solid PVC top and put the good sponge foam underneath. Some lower cost anti-fatigue mats might be solid rubber! Life expectancy of the mat can be dramatically different based on

the materials used to construct it. We need to ask our customers how much traffic will be on the mat to help determine what is the better selection.

In conclusion, selecting mats can be a challenging process, so you need to be careful in going through the process. Here are some basic questions to consider:

- 1) What is the work environment?
- 2) How much traffic?
- 3) What had you been using for a mat (and how did it perform)?
- 4) What is your biggest concern regarding your next mat purchase (expectations)?
- 5) NOTE: Make sure it is clear that you generally get what you pay for with matting (cheaper mats normally do not last as long when you compare similar mats).

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