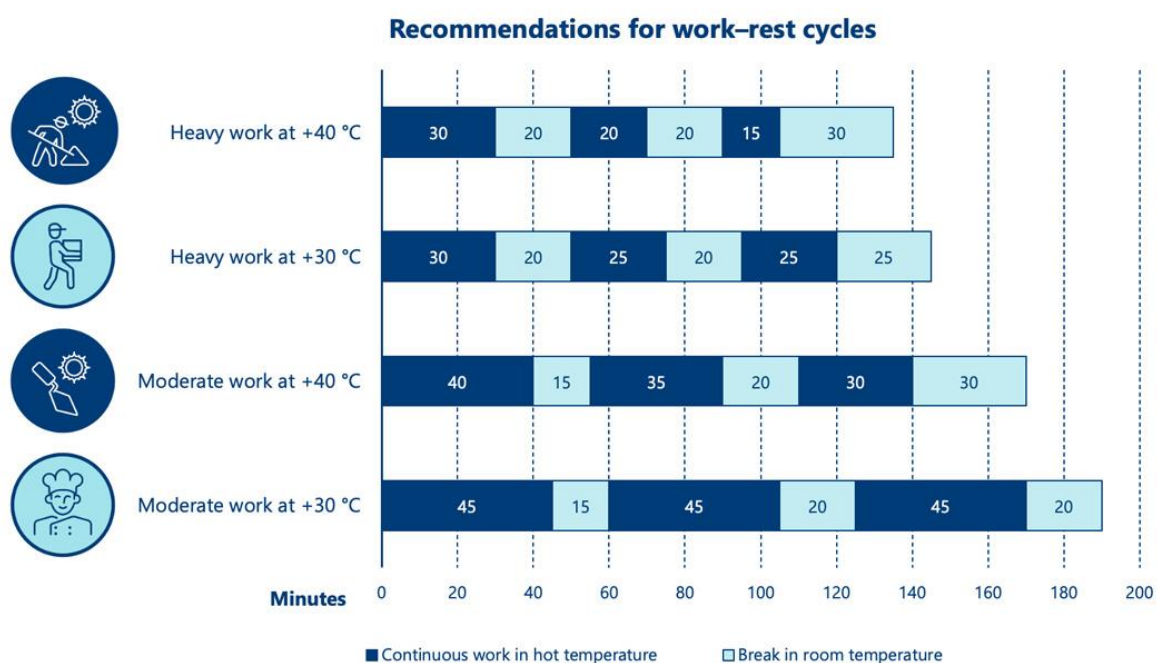


# Better risk management for working in the heat

When working in heat, both the temperature and the physical strain of the work should be considered. The body temperature increases quickly when the workload is heavy, and the ambient temperature is high.

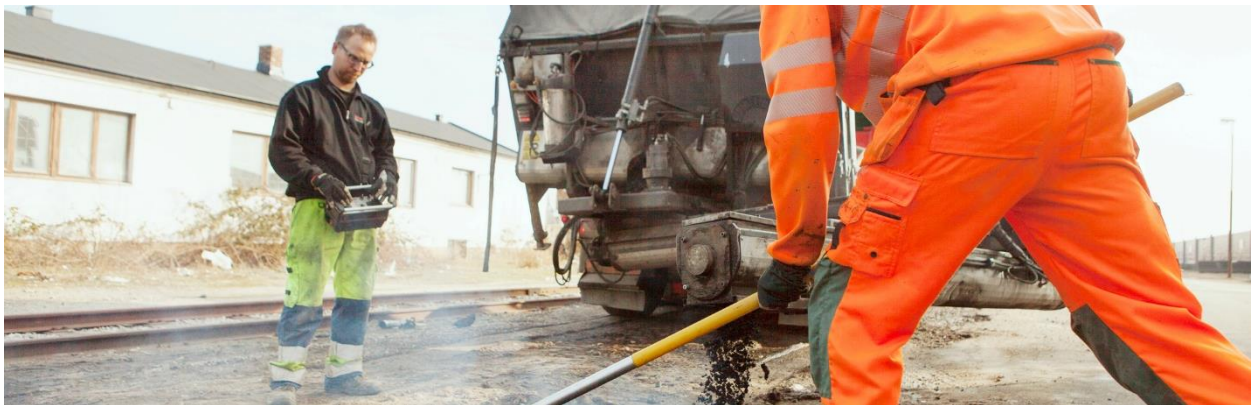


## New recommendations for working in the heat

1. In temperatures above +30 °C, strenuous work should only be done for up to 30 minutes without a break.
2. If strenuous work continues after a break, the working time between breaks shortens, even if the recommended breaks are taken.
3. When strenuous work is done in hot temperatures, recovery requires at least a 20-minute break.
  - If the strenuous work continues, breaks need to be longer.
4. At room temperature, it usually takes 45–60 minutes for the body to cool down.

## Health and safety risks of working in the heat

- Hot working environment puts extra load on the cardiovascular system.
- When muscle temperature rises excessively, muscles become fatigued, and the ability to produce force decreases.
- The rise in body temperature and physical strain also weaken cognitive performance, increasing the risk of accidents.
- The level of workload significantly affects the rate of increase in body temperature.
- Getting accustomed to hot conditions takes time. Especially the first heatwaves of summer and starting new hot work can be challenging for the worker.



## How to reduce risks of working in the heat

### Organizing work

- Ensure adequate recovery between shifts.
- Rotate work tasks and keep physically heavy work periods short.
- One longer break in the middle of the shift reduces the accumulation of heat load.
- Avoid heavy outdoor tasks during the hottest times of the day.
- The hottest times of the day can be avoided with work time arrangements, for example, by starting the workday earlier.

### Break areas, work and protective clothing, and safety equipment

- The break area should be cool, at most room temperature.
- During breaks, remove heavy clothing and protective gear if possible.
- Use different cooling methods: cold packs, fans, showers.
- Choose light, breathable clothing whenever possible.

## Many factors affect heat tolerance

- It takes about two weeks to adapt to hot conditions.
- Rested and recovered workers cope better with heat.
- Good fitness improves heat tolerance; especially endurance training is effective.
- Body fat acts as insulation. Excessive fat hinders the removal of heat from the body.
- As age increases, the ability to regulate temperature weakens. This is especially affected by various illnesses and medications.



The health risks of working in the heat are real,  
but they can be managed.

**FIND OUT MORE**  
(website in Finnish)



**CONTACT US**

- **Jutta Karkulehto**  
Researcher  
jutta.karkulehto@ttl.fi  
+358 30 474 2795
- **Satu Mänttari**  
satu.manttari@ttl.fi  
+358 30 474 6093