

Getting back to work after a workplace injury

KEY INFORMATION FOR WORKERS

RETURN TO WORK PLANS

When you are ready, talk to your employer, your case manager and your healthcare providers about returning to work.

Together you can discuss and agree on a safe way for you to get back to work. This is called making a **Return To Work plan**.

After a workplace injury, **you don't have to be 100% better to return to work**. In fact, getting back to work can help you recover faster.

Starting with less hours or easier tasks can help you recover and get back to your regular work safely.

The plan should be agreed and put in writing by your case manager. It should:

- ☒ Include work that won't make your injury worse.
- ☒ Support your physical and mental health.
- ☒ Take your doctor's advice into account.
- ☒ Be discussed and agreed to by you, your case manager, your employer and your healthcare providers.

MODIFIED DUTIES

Changes to your job that help you get back to work safely are called modified duties. Here are some examples of what is possible.

For physical injuries:	For mental health injuries:
A ban on heavy lifting	Cutting out stressful tasks
Adjustments to your workstation	Changing who you report to
Different work hours	Working in a different location

Your employer needs your doctor's permission to change your duties, and they have to discuss it with you.

KEEP NOTES ON YOUR PROGRESS

Keeping notes on your progress is a good idea. You can do this in a notebook or on your phone. Take a note of how you feel, what tasks are getting easier for you, and how work situations are affecting you.

Having your ideas written down will help when the time comes to talk to your employer and case manager about your Return To Work plan and tell your manager when you feel ready for more hours or duties.

You might need several changes to your Return To Work plan before you are ready to go back to your regular job.

This is normal and it's protected by law.

TAKING CONTROL

It's natural to worry about going back to work. Many people worry about being judged, getting hurt again, or feeling pushed to do too much too soon.

Remember to:

1. **Reach out for help** if you are worried. Your union can help with hard conversations, bullying and other issues, and make sure your legal rights are protected.
2. **Share your ideas** about what you can and can't do and what might help you get back to work sooner.
3. **Understand other supports available in your workplace** such as wellbeing programs and Employee Assistance Programs (EAP).
4. **Focus on the things in your control.**
5. **Keep notes** on important conversations.

GETTING HELP

For support through your workers compensation journey, contact:

- Your workers' compensation case manager
- Your workplace supervisor
- Your workplace Health and Safety Representative
- Your workplace Return To Work Coordinator (if they have one)
- Your workplace HR team
- Your union, if you are a member.

For free and confidential mental health support you can contact:

- Your workplace Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Beyond Blue for 24/7 support – 1300 22 46 36
- LifeLine for 24/7 support – 13 11 14

The It Pays To Care website has a list of key contacts for workers who have been injured including workers' compensation authorities, mental health services and financial support services. Visit www.itpaystocare.org/workers/worker.

It Pays To Care publishes independent information for everyone involved in work injuries, from workers to employers to insurers and regulators.

Please note that It Pays To Care not a support service.