

ADVICE FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE RETURNING TO WORK AFTER HAVING SUFFERED A BRAIN INJURY OR BRAIN ILLNESS

When you have recovered enough from your brain injury or brain illness to think about going back to work, it is important to bear a few things in mind.



1. **GUIDANCE** - Seek expert guidance from health professionals and support services at work. The ideas presented in this leaflet are intended to supplement the advice you receive from these sources.

2. **FATIGUE** - It may be some time since you last worked and you will almost certainly find that although whilst you were still at home you felt fit and well and able to cope, when you actually go back to work you will get tired more easily. This can be especially so in the first few days and weeks of returning to work. Be ready to take a break if you feel you are getting tired or if you are finding it hard to concentrate.



3. **PRESSURE** - You may also find that, because of tiredness and frustrations, you are feeling more anxious than you did before your brain injury or brain illness. Try to cope with any frustrations or anxiety by staying calm, and by seeking advice where necessary.





4. **STAMINA** - Make sure you monitor the amount of time you spend at work. You may have been working an eight- or nine-hour day before your brain illness or brain injury, but you almost certainly will not be able to work that long a day when you initially return to work. You will need to slowly build up to this.

5. **TIME** - Try to make sure you don't have lots of time pressures on your work. To begin with, you may need to allow yourself more time to carry out tasks, even if you were able to do them quickly before.



6. **OVERLOAD** - It may be helpful to make sure you only do one job at a time to begin with. Doing lots of tasks at the same time can be very demanding and you may find you gradually need to build up to

this.

7. **COMPLEXITY** - To begin with, try to keep the tasks that you do at work fairly straightforward and simple. As you settle into the routine of working again, and begin to get your confidence back, gradually increase the complexity of the tasks that you do.





8. *FAMILIARITY* - New tasks may be more difficult to perform than ones you were very familiar with before. Try to begin by doing tasks that you are very familiar with. When learning new tasks make sure you give yourself time to practise or make notes of what you have to do.

9. *SUPPORT* - Support from work colleagues can be important so that you can get help when you need it. Try to ensure that you have such support in place so that it is there if you need it. To those people who matter, briefly explain what has happened to you and the way you are going to phase your return to work.



10. *DISTRACTIONS* - When you go back to work, if at all possible try to work in a quiet environment – some people find that noise from others talking or from machines can disrupt their concentration.

11. *PROGRESS* - If you gradually increase your workload, keeping in mind the factors mentioned above, you should find that your confidence also steadily improves. If you find that you do get into difficulties, or if you have any problems coping, remember that you can always contact health professionals to get further advice and support.





12. *REST* - When you are not at work try to get plenty of rest and relaxation, and try to make sure that you get a good night's sleep. Find time to take part in hobbies and pastimes that you find easy and enjoyable.