



Time2Work

Module 2:

Support materials for people who are already employed when they develop a rheumatic and musculoskeletal disease

Introduction

Work is an important part of peoples' lives; it provides income and contributes to independence and self-esteem, and most people want to stay in work. But when you develop a rheumatic and musculoskeletal disease (RMD) this can lead to a number of challenges. If your condition is 'invisible' such as rheumatoid arthritis, you will face the dilemma of whether to disclose your condition to your employer, manager and co-workers, or try to keep it to yourself. If you do decide, or have to tell them, what should you consider and what type of approach could you take? If your condition is caused by your work, such as repetitive strain injuries, will your employer be able to make appropriate adaptations or offer you an alternative job, or will you need to look at re-training for a different type of work? This tool kit provides you with information, tips and considerations to help you decide how you handle your health and your work.

At first glance it may seem that the information in the fact sheets is biased towards office type work, but many of the tips and considerations are just as relevant if you are involved in manual work. Try to adapt the information to apply to your situation. Select from the fact sheets provided to personalise your tool kit:

- To disclose or not to disclose
- Talking to employers and managers
- Talking to co-workers

- How your doctor and healthcare team can help
- Adapting the workplace

Further fact sheets are available in Module 3 for people who have to take time off work and are re-entering the workplace after a period of rehabilitation. These include:

- Retraining and building confidence
- Preparing for an interview

You may find other useful information from sources such as:

- Occupational Health services
- Human resources department
- Social services
- Health and Pensions
- Trades union
- Disability rights