



Time2Work

Module 3:

Support materials for people with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases returning to work after rehabilitation

Introduction

Having to take time off work due to your rheumatic and musculoskeletal disease (RMD) can be challenging both physically and mentally.

If you have been unemployed for some time due to your condition, you may need to consider undertaking some training courses to build your skills and confidence and be ready to return to work.

If you have to take time off for treatment, but your aim is to return to work, you should make this clear to your healthcare team from the start so they can plan a rehabilitation programme, rather than just signing you off work indefinitely. You should also discuss opportunities for returning to work with your employer. You may want to keep in touch with your employer and co-workers periodically.

You may be able to negotiate a phased return to work, which allows you time to re-adjust through gradually building up to your normal hours and returning to your full duties. The time for this will vary depending on your condition, the type of work you do and how ready your workplace is to help you with your return to work. If you are not able to return to the same level of work as before, you may be able to negotiate a different working pattern or role with your employer.

Depending on the above, your options may be to:

- return to the same job with the same employer OR
- find a different job with the same employer OR

- do the same type of job with a different employer OR
- find a different job with a different employer, using your existing skills OR
- get additional assistance and/or training to help you use the skills you had previously to find employment OR
- re-train for a different job with the same or another employer

This Tool Kit provides you with a selection of information and tips with considerations and ideas to help you through the process of returning to paid or voluntary employment.

Select from the following topics to personalise your Tool Kit with the information you need:

- How your doctor and healthcare team can help
- Retraining and building confidence
- What employers want
- Preparing for an interview with a prospective employer
- To disclose or not to disclose
- Adapting the workplace

Below is a list of sources of further useful information:

[NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS TO FILL IN LOCAL CONTACTS]

For example:

- *Occupational Health services*
- *Social services*
- *Health and Pensions*
- *Disability rights*
- *Etc.*