



Health & Wellbeing Bulletin

Getting Back to Work

Whether it has been due to long-term illness, a sabbatical, maternity or paternity leave, going back to work after time away may make you feel unsure or unprepared for your return. You may be glad to be getting back to normality, however settling back into your job can be a gradual process.

Be Realistic

Don't expect to be up-to-speed within the first week. Give yourself time to catch up with changes in the company you work for. Projects that you were involved in may have moved on – find out what has happened since you were last involved.

If you have been off work for a longer period you may have new colleagues or clients. Introduce yourself to new people. You can ask about the projects they are working on and how they will fit with your role.

Set yourself some achievable targets in the first few weeks so you can focus and get back on track. Plan your goals. Ask your company about their return to work plan and talk about this with your line manager. You can also outline any changes you need to your work station or working hours. You may need to discuss your requirements with a member of your human resources department.

Find a Balance

Make sure you get your work-life balance in order. Get enough exercise so you feel well day to day. Exercise can also help with feelings of stress so if you are facing new challenges you can ensure you meet them head on. It's recommended that you do 30 minutes of exercise each day. Choose an activity you enjoy and plan it into your daily schedule.

Make sure you get a good night's sleep. Simple measures such as ensuring your bedroom isn't too hot or cold, is quiet and you are relaxed before bed all help. While helping to increase your energy levels, regular exercise will also help make sure you get a good night sleep.

Don't drink too much alcohol or caffeine, or smoke. Instead of helping, these stimulants only offer a quick fix and can increase feelings of stress or stop you sleeping. Eat regular meals and a healthy, balanced diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables.

After taking in lots of information you may find it hard to switch off. Relaxation techniques such as breathing exercises and visualisation can help. This may be particularly useful before going to sleep. Leisure activities such as reading can help you focus on something else and take your mind away from work when at home. Allowing yourself some time out such as having a relaxing bath can help too.

Going back to work can help boost your self esteem, mental health and quality of life. You can look at your job with a fresh perspective and can take positive steps with new challenges and projects.

If you do find yourself feeling overwhelmed, allow yourself breathing space to step back and reflect. Don't take on unrealistic commitments that will affect your well-being. If you feel you need to, talk to someone about how you are feeling.

Back To Work Tips

- Give yourself time to catch up with company or team changes
- Introduce yourself formally to new clients and colleagues
- Set yourself achievable targets
- Review companies return to work plan
- Enjoy regular exercise
- Get a good nights sleep
- Don't take too much alcohol / caffeine or smoke before bed
- Eat regular healthy meals
- Use relaxation techniques