

Return to Work

Success Stories



Stay at Work

After 15 years working on an assembly line, Pete began having trouble with his right shoulder. His doctor said that his shoulder problems were due to the repetitive motion of his job duties. He didn't take Pete off work, but did state on the [Work Status Report \(TWCC-73 form\)](#) that Pete could not do any jobs which would require repetitive motion with his right arm and shoulder.

Pete's company had a proactive return to work program, and job task analyses had already been done on many positions in the plant. In fact, the managers had already identified an important job that needed to be done – quality control on outgoing shipments.

Pete's skills and work restrictions were both in line with this alternate work. He accepted the light duty offer and was able to stay at work while he recovered.

Creative solutions for temporary jobs

Barbara helps coordinate return to work programs for a large construction company. She has some employees who don't speak English or are unable to read or write. For this reason, different jobs may be harder to find but not impossible. Think creatively and consider "rainy day" tasks such as restocking shelves, custodial, clerical, or maintenance work.

Think creatively and consider "rainy day" tasks for your injured employees such as restocking shelves, custodial, clerical, or maintenance work.

Employee being teased by coworkers

Anna, a former manager at a retail grocery store chain, knows there are times when employees may feel pressure to return to work (either for job or personal reasons).

In one instance, she remembers an overnight stockperson who was given light-duty tasks only to be teased by coworkers who felt he was faking the injury.



Concerned for the employee's well-being, Anna transferred him to the day shift. "The employee was able to take the time he needed to heal and returned to his regular duties," says Anna.

Nursing injury creates new opportunity

Kim is a nurse at a small hospital. One morning, she was lifting a patient and felt a sharp pain in her back. It turned out to be a ruptured disc and she had to have surgery, which kept her out of work for several weeks.

Kim's supervisor stayed in touch with Kim and her doctor while she was off work. They wanted Kim to know that they wanted her back as soon as it was medically safe. However, when Kim's doctor released her to return to work, there were many restrictions on what she could do. She could not lift anything over 5 lbs, had to take a 15 minute break every hour, and was only allowed to work 4 hours a day.

**Communication is key—
stay in touch with your
employee and the doctor
about work status.**

Not only did Kim's regular nursing job require heavy lifting, but she often had to go without breaks, and was working 12 hour shifts before she got hurt. Kim didn't really think she would be able to go back to work until she fully recovered. But, since her supervisor had told her she wanted her back, she called her to talk about being released to light duty.

Kim's supervisor talked to her about what other things she might be able to help with, that were within her work restrictions. Since she had good computer skills, they decided that Kim could enter patient information into the computer database. This alternate duty would let her work shorter shifts, take breaks when needed, and keep her away from heavy lifting.

By keeping in touch with Kim, the supervisor was able to tell her they wanted her back as soon as possible. Also, it made Kim feel comfortable in asking what jobs she might be able to do while she healed from her back surgery.

