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Work and Study



Starting the process
of returning to work
or study.

A brain injury can affect your ability to return to work or study

Returning to work or study can be beneficial as:



It may assist with your recovery



It will add structure to your day



It can give a sense of achievement



It will broaden your social networks



People stressed the need for understanding and acceptance of the limitations resulting from their brain injury.

Returning to work or study might be difficult because:

- Concentrating makes you really tired
- You have difficulty completing tasks to the same standard you did before
- You forget to do things
- You have difficulty getting to work / classes on time
- The responsibility or tasks are too demanding
- You don't get along with other workers / students because they don't understand your injury or because of personality changes.
- Work or study seems less satisfying
- You can't control your behaviour as well as you used to
- You may find it difficult getting used to the routine
- Your employer doesn't want you back until you can work full-time



You may find that you cannot return to your old job or study immediately.

It may be helpful to:

- Work shorter hours, at least at the start and gradually build up to full hours
- Learn new ways of doing things
- Plan and pace your work tasks
- Take regular breaks
- Change job or the type of study you are doing
- Ask for support from your local Brain Injury Association, Vocational Coach or Rehab Therapist

Your return to work will depend on:

- The severity of your injury
- Your previous work/study/skills and experience
- Medical clearance and readiness to return to work or study
- The type of work or study you are doing
- Your ability to utilise strategies to aid in your return to work or study
- Other influences such as
 - Motivation and perseverance
 - Stamina and fatigue
 - Planning and organising
 - Communication skills (including following directions and your ability to get on with people)
 - Concentration, memory and ability to learn new information

You may need additional support such as:

- Rehabilitation with an occupational therapist, physio or speech language therapist can assist you with impaired function that may affect your return to work / school / university.
- Aids / tools / equipment can be customised to meet your needs to support your return to work
- Job or study coaching or a teacher aide
- Vocational counselling to assist if you need to change jobs
- Job redesign if your position has to be modified



Who can help?

Health professionals such as your doctor or occupational therapist, other community services such as WINZ or your local Brain Injury Association, family and friends all may be able to give you support and advice about returning to work/study after brain injury.



How can they help?

They may be able to:

- Visit worksites/education facilities with you
- Liaise with employers about the work you can do
- Help your employer/workmate/teachers/lecturers/students to understand about brain injury
- Help you to find the best way to do your job
- Help you decide how many hours to work/study
- Check how you are going at work/study and what support is available
- Discuss different types of job or course options with you
- Give you names of people to contact who may be helpful to you
- Help you to decide which job or course suits you the best
- Arrange a work trial while you are getting back up to speed
- Carry out a workplace assessment and offer advice on ways to modify your environment and job tasks to accommodate your needs.

For further information

Some of the other leaflets in this series may help or you can contact your local Brain Injury Association, ACC, Ministry of Health or Disability Resource Information Centres.

For more information go to:
www.brain-injury.org.nz

My important contacts:

Brain Injury Association:

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Case Manager:

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Doctor:

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Other contacts:

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