

Your guide to returning to work and Transitional Work

Why am I getting this brochure?

One of the best ways to help you recover may be for you to go back to work under a plan called *Transitional Work*.



This brochure can answer some of the questions you may have about Transitional Work, its purpose, and what it will mean for you. If you still have questions, please contact your physician or practitioner.

What is Transitional Work?

Your physician or practitioner will refer you to the Transitional Work Program. This is a program that allows you to return to work while you are recovering. You will be doing a set of tasks that may or may not be tasks from your regular job. You and your employer will decide which tasks work best for you. Those tasks can change from week to week as your condition improves. If you have questions about the safety of a particular activity, you can contact your treating physician. Transitional Work is part of your medical treatment; it helps you to recover more quickly and completely.

Transitional Work is temporary. Its purpose is to help you get better, so you can go back to your usual job.

Transitional Work can help you get better sooner

You are the most important part of the Transitional Work team

What now?

You are the key to your recovery.

Here are some steps you can take that will help you get back on the road to recovery:

- Concentrate on staying active and getting better.
- Take the Kaiser Permanente return-to-work release form to your employer.
- Work with your employer to come up with a good Transitional Work plan.
- Let your physician know of any problems or changes in your condition.
- Give Transitional Work a chance to work for you.

A final word

For health information, check your *Healthwise® Handbook*; visit the member section of our Web site at members.kp.org; or call the Kaiser Permanente Healthphone at **1-800-33-ASK ME (1-800-332-7563)**. To get your *Handbook* and *Kaiser Permanente Healthphone Directory*, call **1-800-464-4000**.

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Employee Return-to-Work Guide



Transitional Work



KAISER PERMANENTE®

Why do I need Transitional Work?

In most cases, it is important to stay active while recovering from an illness or an injury.

By doing transitional duties at work, you are likely to...

- lose less income.
- feel less stress.
- get back to your regular job sooner.
- stay involved with your coworkers and employer.

What's wrong with recovering at home?

Staying at home might be necessary for people who have very serious injuries or illnesses, or who have a contagious condition.

However, it is usually best to go back to work if you can. The lack of exercise from staying at home can weaken your body and make you susceptible to reinjury when you do return to work.

Staying active is important to your recovery

Won't I hurt myself again if I go back to work so soon?

No one can guarantee that you will not injure yourself again when you go back to work. However, a good Transitional Work plan will help protect you by limiting the tasks you do on the job.

When you keep active with transitional duties, your muscles stay stronger and you are less likely to reinjure yourself when you return to your regular job.

Work can be the best treatment

How long does Transitional Work last?

The answer is different for each person. Talk with your physician about your goals for recovery and how long you should expect to do Transitional Work. Talk to your employer about how their Transitional Work program works.

What is my role?

You and your employer should work as a team to design your Transitional Work plan. Some workplaces have a Transitional Work coordinator who can help with this process.

Start by asking yourself, "What parts of my regular job could I still do?" and "What kinds of things need to be done that I could do?" Talk about your ideas with your employer.

You'll know you have a good plan if...

- the tasks are safe for you to do and are helping you get better.
- you are accomplishing things that are valuable to you and your employer.

What if my employer and I cannot think of anything for me to do?

If this happens, let your physician know as soon as possible. That way, your physician can recommend additional treatment options if necessary.

After you have recovered more fully, you and your employer may be able to find transitional duties that are right for you.

What if I try Transitional Work and I can't do it?

It is important that you be able to do your transitional tasks without hurting yourself.

Your Kaiser Permanente return-to-work release form has information about which kinds of tasks you should and should not do. If your Transitional Work plan includes tasks that you feel you should not do, tell your employer.

Let your physician know right away if any part of your job causes you pain or physical problems. Your physician will talk with you or examine you to find out whether your activities are causing any harm. In the meantime, do less of those activities — or stop them altogether.

Do I have to do this?

No one can force you to take part in Transitional Work. However, please keep in mind that this is your physician's recommendation for you. Doing transitional tasks at work is one of the best ways for you to recover more quickly.

Is this the end of my medical treatment?

In most cases, Transitional Work is only a part of your treatment. You may also do physical or occupational therapy, use medication, have tests or surgery, or see your health care practitioner for follow-up visits.

Remember, Transitional Work is an important part of your treatment.

Transitional Work is not something that is being done to you; it is something that is done for you to help speed your recovery and brighten your future!