

Step 6: Keeping healthy and productive at work

KEY FACTS:

Return to work should be seen as a process. It may take some time until you feel back to your old self.

Remember to continue to do the things that made you feel well enough to return to work. This may be: keeping up therapy, practicing mindfulness, treating yourself, using your support networks, including getting others to help you recognise your triggers and signs, and sticking to a Wellness and Recovery Action Plan.

WHAT TO DO:

- **Regular check-ins with yourself**
 - Are you looking after your basic needs? Eating healthily, exercising, sleeping, taking regular breaks, managing home demands?
 - If not, what action is needed?
- **Regular check-ins with your manager or designated colleague**
 - Your employer should follow-up with you once you are back, in line with your agreed return to work plan
 - Revisit your work plan - does anything need to be changed?
 - Have any colleagues/ manager/ family noticed any of your triggers? If so, what action is needed?

CHECKLIST:

[Maintaining my health](#)

WHAT TO SAY:

What to say if you are finding work difficult or your mental health is starting to get worse?

If you are finding work challenging or your mental health starting to get worse, it is important to let your manager or designated colleague know as soon as possible. For example, you might say... "Can we bring forward our return to work review? I am finding work challenging and want to take steps to prevent me from falling ill again." Return to Steps 2 and 4 to develop a new plan.

What to say if you are feeling much better and want to return to your previous workload/tasks?

If you are feeling much better, tell your manager or designated colleague what you would like. For example, you might say... "I am feeling ready to take on more responsibility and go back to my previous workload. Specifically"

Long-term disability

If your mental ill-health becomes long term it may be classed as a disability. Under the Equality Act 2010, in the UK (other than Northern Ireland) you are classed as disabled if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities (see the [GOV.UK website](#) for more info).

If you need long-term adaptations to your job, the Government's '[Access to work](#)' scheme might be able to provide a grant.

What happens if I really can no longer do my job?

Unfortunately, a small number of people find they are unable to continue to work in their current job. This may be because the business is unable to accommodate the appropriate work adjustments, or the employee is too unwell to resume work. If this is the case for you, you may be able to seek advice from ACAS or Fit for Work services.

There are many different workplaces and many different jobs. It might take time to find the job that is right for you; but remember, mental ill-health doesn't have to be a barrier to work. While work may feel some distance away, it is important to keep active, return to Step 2 and try different ways to improve your health.