
MANAGING YOUR PAIN

TEN TIPS FOR RETURNING TO WORK

*JOHN SOLOMON AND HEATHER ROSE
OUTLINE TEN SELF-HELP STRATEGIES
WHICH HAVE HELPED THEM COPE
WITH PAIN AND WORKING LIFE*

1. Try to return to work on a part time basis and gradually increase your hours until you are working a full day. If this is impossible and you must work a full day, go back to work on a Wednesday rather than a Monday, making a three-day- week rather than a five.
2. Choose your method of travel carefully. It is important for this to be as stress and vibration free as possible. You might need to use a more expensive form of transport, than in the past, to enable you to get to work without aggravating your pain.
3. If possible, make sure your chair is adjustable to the correct height and you have proper back support and if need be a foot rest. Arrange your work area in such a way that twisting and bending are cut to a minimum. A lectern or adjustable sloping working surface may help.

4. An Occupational Therapist can visit your office and suggest improvements. (Heather was advised to have her switchboard on a shelf in front of her, allowing her to slide paper underneath instead of twisting every time she answered a call). There are

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small swivel shelves to hold telephones, etc.

5. Every time you leave your work area train yourself to do a rapid relaxation. It is amazing how quickly this can become second nature every time you get a break. (We know not everyone is lucky enough to have a tea break but everyone does get comfort breaks!)
6. Try to avoid sitting or standing in one position for any length of time. It may not be appropriate to move around all the time but gentle stretch exercises help stop you seizing up and causing more pain. (Work colleagues quickly get used to you doing heron impersonations in the queue of the staff restaurant)
7. At the end of the working day make time for a full relaxation session. Remember everything else can wait and other family members can help!
8. Try to space out-of-work activities out over weeks rather than cramming everything into one week when you have been out at work. The world is not going to come to an end if vacuuming and household repairs are put off until the weekend.

Lengthy tasks can be spread out over a few days rather than a two-hour stint. Dust or a dripping tap won't hurt you but over-activity may cause a flare up.

9. Plan outings and entertaining carefully. We are not

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suggesting you give up your social life entirely but most of us know if we get over-tired we are more likely to have a flare up.

10. Pace your activities over the weekend giving consideration to the fact that it's back to work on Monday. Sustainability is the name of the game.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

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CAMPAIGNING ON PAIN

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PUTTING YOU IN CONTROL

- *Free Factsheet and leaflets to help you manage your pain – send for our information pack.*
- *Our magazine Pain Matters brings you the best of self help:*
 - *How to cope with pain.*
 - *How well are our pain services working?*
 - *Updates on the latest developments.*
- *Helpline 0844 499 4676.*

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