

Return to Work

Working while having chronic pain can be a challenge. Here are some simple tips to help manage your pain in the workplace. You can also read the following resource from Pain B.C. for more information about [returning to work](#).

Returning to work

- If you feel comfortable, tell your employer about your pain. If they know your situation, they can better understand your need for medical appointments, to pace your work or to change your work environment.
- When returning to work, ask for a graduated return to work. You and your health care team can come up with a return-to-work schedule that gradually increases your duties/tasks and/or hours of work over the given timeline. Continue to check in with your employer and health care professional and share any concerns you have.
- Ask what workplace accommodations are available. Typically, the onus is on the worker to notify their employer if they need accommodation. If the need is related to a disability, a worker does not have to disclose a specific medical diagnosis when requesting an accommodation. They must only disclose their functional limitations or restrictions that create the need for accommodation. Employers should accept requests for accommodation in good faith. They should only request supporting information when it is absolutely required to implement the necessary accommodation. Employers have a duty to accommodate a worker's disability-related needs regardless of whether the disability results from a workplace incident.
- Modify your workstation to help decrease pain while at work. Ask your employer if you can have an ergonomic assessment completed by an Occupational Therapist or Health and Safety. They will be able to assess your current workstation and make recommendations based on your situation. View [WorkSafeBC's How to Make Your Computer Workstation Fit You](#), a self-help guide on how to identify and solve problems with computer workstations.
- Sitting or standing for long periods of time will increase your pain; it is important to change positions frequently or take five-minute stretch breaks regularly. **Watch** about using laptops for work and at home.
- Reduce lifting and bending with heavy objects. Avoid twisting as you lift. [Watch this video on lifting in the workplace](#).

Resources

[WorkBC Employment Centres](#) provides a wide range of free employment services to job seekers in British Columbia to help prepare for, find, and keep good jobs.

[Government of B.C.: Job and career training](#) These resources outline your options for industry and career training.

[Workplace accommodation guide](#) A guide that outlines the responsibilities of the workers and the employers for Workplace Accommodation.