



## Return to work resources for Managers

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### Away from work: regular contact

EMAIL SUBJECT: Reminder – Keep in touch with [EMPLOYEE]

EMAIL BODY:

Hi [MANAGER]

Hopefully you've had a chance to contact [EMPLOYEE] since he's/she's been off work and have begun the process of supporting him/her to recover at work. Research shows that people can really benefit from regular contact with their managers and colleagues while they are off work.

That's why I've sent you a series of fortnightly 15 minute placeholders to chat with [EMPLOYEE]. Feel free to move them around, they're just meant to be simple reminder prompts for you to keep in touch with [EMPLOYEE].

To help structure your regular check-ins, here's another

Conversation starter

To refresh yourself on things you can do to help [EMPLOYEE], you can use this

Checklist

And remember that I'm here to assist you in [EMPLOYEE]'s recovery and return to work.

Kind regards

[CASE MANAGER SIGNATURE BLOCK]

# Regular check-ins

## CONVERSATION STARTER

This tool aims to assist you in your conversations with your injured/ill employee



## Checking in while the employee is away

Musculoskeletal disorders  
(e.g. neck or back pain, sprains or strains, occupational overuse syndrome)

- Flag your interest in talking about how you can help with the return to work process.
- Highlight your willingness to facilitate a graduated return to work as a step towards full recovery.
- Ask your employee if they have talked to their GP about the activities that they can do even if not related to their current job. This might help in thinking about modified duties later on.

Mental illnesses (e.g. depression/mood disorders, anxiety disorders, PTSD)

- Make it clear that their return to good mental health is the priority and that you are available for support, even if that just means an occasional chat.

## Return to work facts

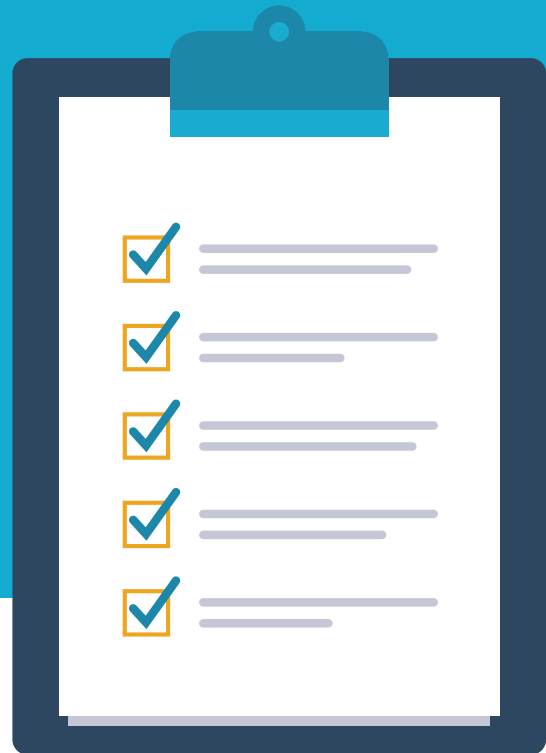
You don't have to be 100% well to be back at work... research shows people are more likely to recover from physical injury when they are at work.

Staying active after injury also helps... reducing pain symptoms and helping employees return to their usual activities at home and at work sooner.

- Note that while you plan to check in from time to time, you don't want to put pressure on the employee to talk about the return to work process if/when they don't feel up to it.

# Return to work checklist

This checklist touches on some of the key things you should be doing at different stages of the RTW process.



## 1. Away from work

- Reach out to the employee early to show support
- Establish regular contact with the employee
- After checking with your employee, let co-employees know the broad circumstances for why the employee is away and encourage them to reach out where appropriate

## 2. Preparing to return

- Prepare for their return to work by thinking about what work must be done, and when and how it can be delivered
- Start discussing suitable duties and workplace accommodations with the employee (focusing on what they can do, not what they can't do)
- Consider how the return to work will impact the team and how to talk to them about possible changes. Remember to respect privacy – ask the employee what they would like you to tell the team
- Put in place any changes needed to the work environment, e.g modified desk or headset

## 3. On return/first week

- Meet with the employee on their first day back
- Discuss a plan for checking in regularly to see how the employee is going and whether the support still works

## 4. Within three months of return

- Check in with the employee to chat about progress towards sustainable return goals
- Provide feedback to HR on the process to help future managers