



# WORKING IS HEALING

YOUR GUIDE TO TRANSITIONAL WORK —  
A RETURN-TO-WORK PROGRAM

**Kaiser On-the-Job<sup>®</sup>**  
**GUIDE FOR EMPLOYEES**



All plans offered and underwritten by  
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan of the Northwest.  
500 NE Multnomah St., Suite 100, Portland, OR 97232.



## **Why do I need Transitional Work?**

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

**By taking part in the program, you are likely to:**

- Lose less income
- Have more peace of mind
- Get back to your regular job sooner
- Stay connected with your co-workers and employer

## **What's wrong with recovering at home?**

Staying at home and restricting your activities might be necessary if you have a serious injury, illness, or contagious condition. However, it's usually best to stay active. The lack of exercise from staying at home can weaken your body and make you more likely to injure yourself again when you 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 you'll be safe from on-the-job injuries. However, a good Transitional Work plan will help protect you by limiting your tasks. When you keep active with transitional duties, your muscles stay stronger and you're less likely to injure yourself again 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 practitioner about your goals for recovery and how long you should expect to work through the Transitional Work program. Talk with your employer about coming up with a Transitional Work plan that works for you.

### **What kinds of tasks will my Transitional Work plan include?**

You and your employer should work as a team to prepare a plan that's right for you. 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 other tasks could I do for my employer?" Talk about your ideas with your employer.

### **You'll know you have a good plan if:**

- The tasks are safe for you to perform and are helping you get better
- You're accomplishing tasks that are valuable to you and your employer

### **What if my employer and I cannot come up with a good Transitional Work plan?**

If this happens, let your practitioner know as soon as possible. That way, he or she can recommend other treatment options, if necessary.

After you've 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 cannot do it?**

It's important that you be able to perform your transitional tasks without hurting yourself. Your Kaiser Permanente work status form will have information about the tasks you should be able to do and the ones you should avoid. If your Transitional Work plan includes tasks that you feel might slow your recovery, tell your employer.

Let your practitioner know right away if any part of your job causes you pain or physical problems. He or she will talk with you or examine you to find out whether your activities are causing any harm. In the meantime, try to avoid those activities.

## **Do I have to participate?**

No one can force you to take part in Transitional Work. However, your practitioner recommends it as an important part of your medical treatment. Doing transitional tasks at work is one of the best ways for a faster recovery.

## **Is this the end of my medical treatment?**

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

**TRANSITIONAL WORK OFFERS  
MANY HEALTHY RETURNS. BELIEVE  
IN THE POWER OF A HEALTHY YOU!**



## RECOVER FASTER. RETURN STRONGER.

Returning to work after an injury or illness can be difficult. A smooth transition can help you feel more comfortable and confident. And feeling comfortable is important to feeling healthy.

That's where the Transitional Work program comes in. It allows you to return to work in a way that's right for your health. And it's one of the best ways to help you recover. Your practitioner may recommend it as part of your medical treatment.

At Kaiser Permanente, we want you to have everything you need to take an active role in your recovery. To assist you, this brochure answers some of the questions you may have about Transitional Work. Please contact your practitioner if you have additional questions.

### **Will I go right back to my usual job?**

The tasks you perform through Transitional Work may or may not be duties from your regular job. You and your employer will decide which tasks work best for you, and your duties can change from week to week as your condition improves.

If you're concerned about the safety of a particular task, contact your treating physician. Remember, Transitional Work is part of your medical treatment; it's a temporary program that will help you recover faster, so you can go back to your usual routine sooner.

## HELP YOURSELF HEAL MORE QUICKLY, SAFELY, AND COMPLETELY.

## What now?

Remember, you're the key to your recovery.

Here are some tips to help you stay on the road to recovery:

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

**YOU'RE THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR TRANSITIONAL WORK TEAM.**

For health information, visit us online at [kp.org/occupationalhealth/nw](http://kp.org/occupationalhealth/nw).

Or call us at **503-571-3366** or **1-888-414-3531**.

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