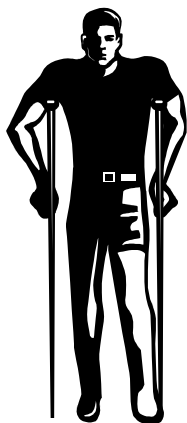


The amount of suffering is bad enough but, the toll on mental health and the impact on family from the stress during recovery is rarely considered. Here's how you and those you love bounce back sooner. And here's how your EAP can help.

Workplace Injuries: Stress and Recovery

Back to Work When Ready is Key Going back to work as soon as you are able will help you avoid the pitfalls of long-term recovery. These can include depression, isolation, family conflicts, deterioration of workplace relationships, anxiety, and fear of losing job skills, and of course income.

Your Mission: Getting Well and Back to Work Keep appointments and follow medical instructions. Even if you are beginning to feel better, do not stop medications or begin participating in activities that can cause re-injury. Medical practitioners will help prepare you for a safe return to work through proper medication and exercise, which could include a work hardening program. Being determined to succeed will benefit your recovery. Studies of injured workers attitudes demonstrate that how you feel about your injury affects your recovery.



Recovery Roadblocks While waiting for recovery are you:

- Feeling depressed or feeling “flat” with no emotion?
- Becoming very emotional?
- More easily irritated or angered than usual?
- Taking excessive amounts of pain medication?
- Ignoring doctor's recommendations because recovery feels hopeless?
- Experiencing conflict with those at work?
- Experiencing more conflicts at home?

Staying Positive If an injury resulted from not being cautious or following a safety rule, don't mentally punish yourself for it. It is better to commit to change and how you will avoid injury in the future.

Being Off Work May be Bad for Your Health Studies show that employees injured and off work for six to twelve months only have 10-20% chance of returning to work. Not working can lead to poorer physical and mental health, loss of self-worth and self-confidence, and social isolation. Anger and depression are other risks you face along with boredom and apathy. Your mission is to fight these changes and stay positive.

Staying Active and Charting Your Success Get your doctor's approval for staying physically active. Keep a recovery chart so that you can see your progress. Get out of the house if at all possible. Change the scenery. And find appropriate ways to keep up with what's going on at work. Consider on-line courses or other training to improve your skills and abilities.

Returning to Work You may be offered light duty to accommodate the state of your recovery as permitted by your health care provider. Don't resist light duty work. Even if light duty is not your preferred job, getting back to work will do you more good than you realize. If you return to your regular job, do not participate in duties you once performed that have not been medically approved. Feeling guilty or yielding to peer pressure to perform unapproved duties can lead to sudden injury again. Be prepared for comments like “Come on, just help me lift this container...” or “So, what's it like getting all the easy jobs?”

What the EAP Can Do The EAP coordinator can meet with you during your recovery to offer you support and refer you to resources in the community that can aid your recovery. Call the EAP early before you begin to notice depression, family conflicts, or struggles associated with coworkers or supervisors while off work.