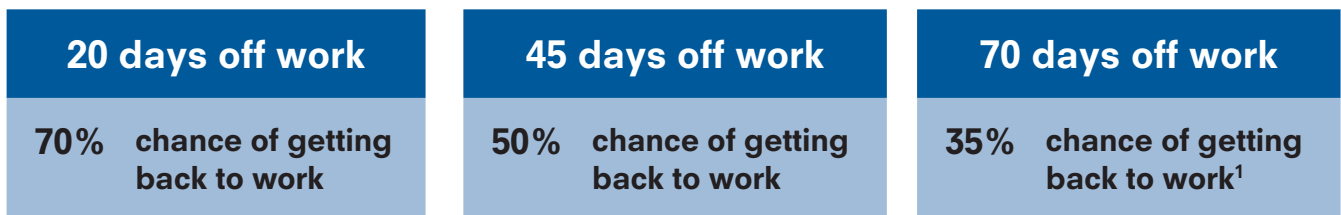


Can getting back to the workplace improve your health?

Returning to work after an injury or illness can be challenging, but it helps. There is overwhelming evidence that work can improve health and wellbeing.

Not returning to work as quickly as possible after an injury can have serious consequences because the longer someone's away from work, the greater the chance they will never return to work.



Being out of work for a long time may have a negative impact on a person's health. Studies show it will reduce their life expectancy and can result in mental health issues such as depression.

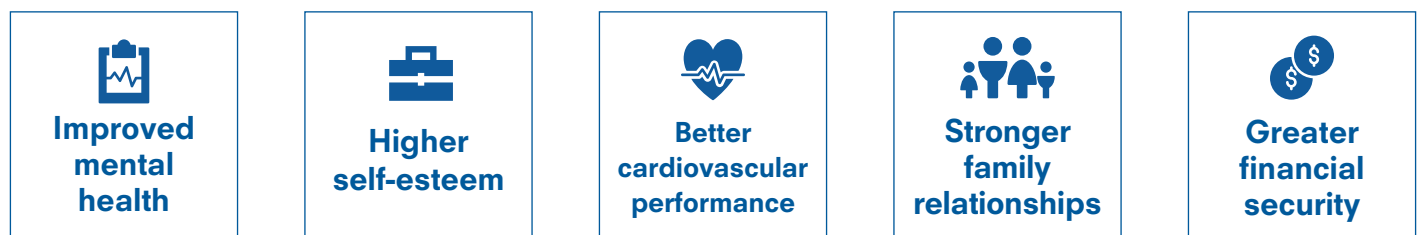


Same health risk as smoking 10 packs of cigarettes every day²

Six times greater risk of committing suicide³

40 times greater risk of suicide for young men out of work six months or more⁴

Being at work can bring far-reaching benefits for an individual and their family.



In most cases, an earlier return to work after an injury results in earlier recovery.

An injured person does not have to wait until they are 100% recovered until they return to the workplace. And, getting in touch sooner can make their return to work journey easier.⁵

1 Johnson D, Fry T. Factors Affecting Return to Work after Injury: A study for the Victorian WorkSafe Victoria Authority. Melbourne: Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research; 2002.

2 Ross J. Where do real dangers lie? Smithsonian 1995; 8:42-53.

3 Wessely S. Mental health issues. In: K H-E, ed. What about the workers? Proceedings of an RSM Symposium. London: Royal Society of Medicine Press; 2004:41-6.

4 Wessely Bartley M, Sacker A, Schoon I, Kelly M, Carmona C. Work, non-work, job satisfaction and psychological health: evidence review: Health Development Agency; 2005.

5 Worksafe Victoria, The sooner the better. A guide to starting the return to work conversation.



How to get the benefits of an early return to work

It takes a team effort to achieve a fast return to work after an injury.

No one can do it by themselves, and everyone has an important role to play. Coordination between the injured person, their employer, insurer and healthcare providers delivers the best results.



Injured person:

Participate fully in their rehabilitation and stay in touch with their workplace. Talk to their doctor about what they can do, rather than what they can't.



Employer:

Maintain regular contact with the injured person. Make every effort to find 'suitable duties' that fit the person's current capacity, so they can come back to the workplace as soon as possible.



Doctor and treatment providers:

Deliver medical treatment and rehabilitation support, and make sure the injured person understands the health benefits of an early return to work. Investigate and document their capacity so their employer can identify suitable duties.



Insurance company:

Coordinate the recovery process including access to treatment and rehabilitation.

Explain the claim process to the injured person and pay all allowable and reasonably necessary expenses.

More information about the health benefits of good work is available on the [Royal Australasian College of Physicians website](#).

