

# How do I find suitable duties for my worker after they've been injured?

Employer resource



Watch the video

Helping your worker to get back to work after an injury can help them to recover sooner, keeps them connected to the workplace and boosts morale. It's also an obligation for employers under Queensland law.

Tasks your worker can do while they're recovering are called 'suitable duties'. Here are some tips for finding suitable duties for a worker after a physical injury.

## Tip one: focus on what your worker can do

By focusing on your worker and their strengths and abilities, you'll help everyone stay positive. Watch the video on **How does offering suitable duties benefit my business?** for more information.

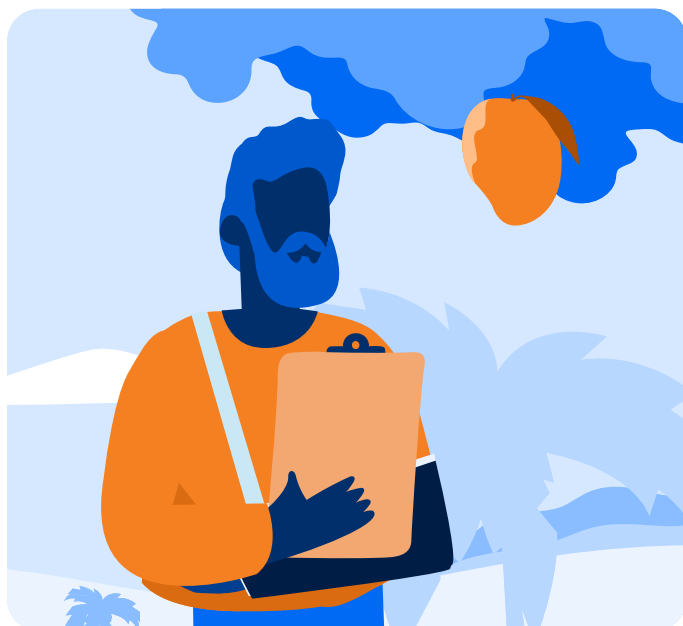
## Tip two: be flexible

Being flexible with your worker as they recover helps them to build up their confidence.

This might look like offering reduced hours, modifying tasks, or providing a different workplace setting like remote work to assist while they're getting better.

## Tip three: prioritise open communication

Talk with your worker regularly and listen to their needs and concerns. This shows you care and helps with making any adjustments needed along the way.



## Tip four: identifying duties that are the right fit

It's important to identify duties that are the right fit for your worker and their injury while they're recovering.

You could start by asking your worker what work they think they could safely do as they recover, in line with their doctor's advice. This is a good way to collaborate and build trust.

You can also look at any restrictions on their work capacity certificate together, to help you decide.

Speak to WorkCover if you're unsure. We can share guidance from a worker's doctor or specialist if it directly relates to helping a worker get back to work.

## Tip five: finding suitable duties

To identify duties for your worker, based on medical advice and what they can do, you could start by:

- Talking to other business areas or look at different job descriptions in your workplace to find tasks outside of your worker's usual role.
- Can you reduce the complexity, or pace of work?
- What technology or tools might help them with their work?

If your worker has a mental injury, **access our other resource to help with finding suitable duties.**

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## Tip six: have a plan in place and stay in touch

WorkCover will support you to ensure there's a rehabilitation and return to work plan in place for your worker.

This plan outlines what work they'll be doing, timelines and how everyone will work together to support them.

It's important that everyone agrees on the plan before starting. This helps your worker know what to expect and shows them their recovery is taken seriously.

You'll also know when things aren't going as planned, so you can make adjustments if needed.

### Remember

Offering suitable duties is an obligation for employers under Queensland law.

There are penalties for not offering meaningful suitable duties without good reason.

If you can't meet this obligation, you will be asked to put your reasons in writing, along with steps you took to find tasks for your worker.

Find out more: **What are my obligations in a WorkCover claim?**

## How to reduce stigma

One of the biggest barriers workers face when going back to work after a workplace injury is stigma.

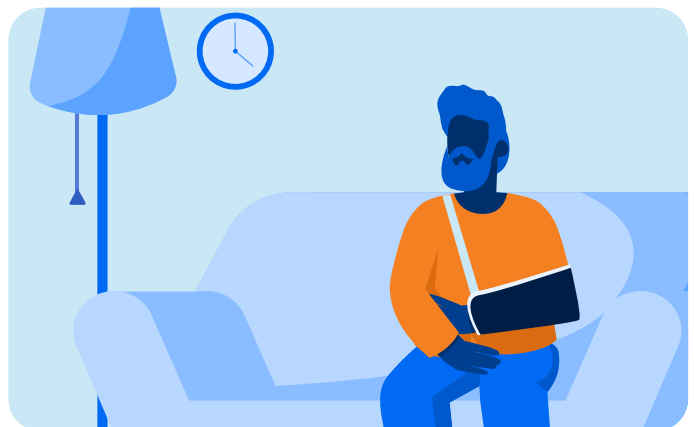
You can help create a workplace culture where people know they are valued and feel supported and comfortable to talk about their mental health.

See our website for tools to **create a mentally healthy workplace**.

You can remind the team to be supportive and make sure they're aware of any steps you've taken to reduce the impact of their co-worker's absence.

If you can, keep the team updated with timing for when your worker is due back at work, and any suitable duties they'll be doing at the start.

For more guidance, see our resources on **Tips for talking to workers and their team after an injury**.



## WorkCover is here to help

If you have any questions, you can find your claim contact on WorkCover Connect and reach them directly. Or you can call one of our team on **1300 362 128**.

[worksafe.qld.gov.au](https://worksafe.qld.gov.au)

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