

COVID-19

Support and self-care



The information is shared on condition that readers will make their own determination, including seeking advice from a healthcare professional. E&OE.

Confidential assistance is available through the
Life EHS Employee Wellness Programme.
SMS your name to 31581.

Life EHS
Employee Health Solutions

Making a meaningful, measurable, difference.

Resuming life and work commitments

1 When can I return to work^{1,2}?

For persons recovered from COVID-19 infection, the National Institute for Communicable Diseases states that a person is considered safe to return to the workplace and discontinue self-isolation if they are no longer infectious. This means they developed their first symptoms more than 14 days prior and have not experienced any symptoms for at least 3 days (72 hours).

At present, re-testing people who have experienced mild illness, and have recovered from COVID-19 is not recommended.

2 Tips to help you navigate a more successful return to work³:

After several months of lockdown, you may find getting back into your work routine somewhat challenging – especially since we don't know what the new normal in a work environment may look like.

Although you may need to make some adjustments as new regulations roll out, having a clear strategy will make settling in easier. Follow these tips to help you get back into work mode.

Pace yourself

Day one might feel completely surreal since many people haven't been in a formal work environment setting for more than a month. It's important to take a moment and acknowledge this, instead of throwing yourself in at the deep end.

Be mindful

You don't need any special training to find some quiet time to acknowledge and deal with feelings of anxiety. This is something you can control, which is important when it feels as though so much is out of control.

Try this 1-minute mindfulness exercise at your desk:

- Take a moment to pause and stop what you are doing.
- Focus on your breathing – inhale and exhale deeply.
- Observe. Ask yourself: Who am I? What do I want? What am I grateful for? What am I here to do?

Be grateful

Expressing gratitude is a simple, yet effective way to keep yourself grounded. When you are least grateful, you are most in need of what gratitude provides – perspective. Writing down what you're grateful for allows you to be more optimistic, relish good experiences and build stronger relationships. Be kind to yourself and acknowledge yourself for milestones reached.

The information is shared on condition that readers will make their own determination, including seeking advice from a healthcare professional. E&OE.

**Confidential assistance is available through the
Life EHS Employee Wellness Programme.
SMS your name to 31581.**

Life EHS
Employee Health Solutions

Making a meaningful, measurable, difference.

Resuming life and work commitments (*continued*)

Recognise and manage your emotions

Give yourself time to adjust to being back at work, but be willing to ask for help if you need it. Don't pretend that things are OK if they're not. Many of us share common reactions to change, so it's likely you're not the only one feeling a certain way.

Be flexible

Many organisations have had to make radical changes in response to the pandemic, so it is important to be open-minded to respond positively to change, while also retaining your core values.

Express yourself

Talking to those close to you will help by providing you with ongoing support. Keep open lines of communication with your colleagues by sharing your return-to-work challenges and experiences and discuss your needs or concerns with your manager too if required.

Boost your coping mechanisms

This is a good time to focus on your well-being, and to do everything you can to stay healthy, energetic, and positive. Eating, exercising, and sleeping well are more important than ever. Constantly evaluating your core strengths and being self-aware can help you to monitor your mental and emotional health, and to recognise the areas in which you may need a boost.

Learn and grow

Challenging times such as these often present us with an opportunity to reassess our priorities and to make the required changes we need to, so we can live and work in new and more positive ways.

Use the lessons you've learned about yourself during lockdown to your advantage; continue to be mindful about your health and wellbeing whilst remaining open and alert to new opportunities for growth.

References

1. National Institute for Communicable Diseases. COVID-19 and returning back to work frequently asked questions. <https://www.nicd.ac.za/covid-19-and-returning-back-to-work-frequently-asked-questions/> Published 2020 07 09
2. Life EHS. How to approach work after lockdown flyer. May 2020
3. Life EHS Return to Work Toolkit, June 2020

The information is shared on condition that readers will make their own determination, including seeking advice from a healthcare professional. E&OE.

Confidential assistance is available through the
Life EHS Employee Wellness Programme.
SMS your name to 31581.

Life EHS
Employee Health Solutions

Making a meaningful, measurable, difference.