



## The Employee Experience and Workplace Injury Prevention

# How Onsite PTs Reduce Worker Stress

Workers are faced with significant life disruption following injury. They may be experiencing something new, they are uncertain how workers' compensation "works", family plans are disturbed and more. Worker thoughts and fears impact behavior and can delay return to work.

When workers can ask for help from a familiar face, an onsite physical therapist (PT), there's less worry. Check out these common worries and how an onsite PT can help.

### Worker Worries

1. Am I hurt and am I going to be able to work?
2. What happens now? What can I expect?
3. How long until I am back to normal or can do my normal job?
4. I'm worried that I will never be the same or I have a really bad problem.

### How an Onsite PT Eases Worries

Workers aren't always sure if they are injured. Plus, they may not want to make a big deal out of something or worry about paperwork. The worker, supervisor, HSE (health, safety, ergonomics) personnel or nurse can ask a therapist to help screen workers who have musculoskeletal discomfort.

With onsite care, workers, supervisors and HSE personnel have easy access to individuals who understand how bodies heal, what types of things can be done during healing and options regarding work adaptations with little disruption.

Onsite therapists have a good understanding of typical healing timelines and can help workers know what to expect. Since they are at the workplace, they understand the type of work the individual performs.

Knowing what to expect and having a plan reduces worry. Some worry can lead to behaviors that slow healing or reduce interactions with friends, family and coworkers. Onsite therapists can answer worker questions and help workers keep on track with their healing and rehab plans.



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| 5. Going back and forth to hospitals and medical clinics takes time. How do I fit appointments into an already busy life? | Onsite therapists are easily accessible and help reduce time away from work, stress on coworkers covering while the worker is at rehab and supervisor time spent adjusting schedules.   |
| 6. I don't understand all the medical stuff? How can I make sense of it all?  | Therapists can help workers make sense out of medical information (and correct misinformation). Workers, supervisors and HSE personnel have relatively easy access to onsite therapists and can help communication between medical providers and the workplace.   |
| 7. How do the doctors and therapists know what I really do for work?  | Most onsite therapists understand physical job demands prior to injury (or can easily get that information), allowing for individualized care based on the specific injury. It helps medical personnel get accurate information quickly. The PT's understanding of work and the workplace allows more appropriate discussions and empathy.  |
| 8. How am I going to get back to work?  | Depending on the worker ability after an injury, modified work may allow the worker to return to work. Onsite therapists can walk over to the job area with the employee and offer coaching advice. It may include advice on ergonomic changes or temporary work adaptations that will protect healing and allow the worker to continue to work.  |
| 9. I am worried that I may be going back to work too quickly. Am I going to get reinjured?                                | Some anxiety or worry is common as healing progresses and there is a return to normal activity. The onsite therapist can observe the worker performing tasks and help with advice and support during return to work transitions.  |
| 10. I feel like everyone tells me what to do and I don't really get a say in my care (I suppose they know better).        | Some workers are intimidated by medical staff, don't feel comfortable asking questions or feel they will be perceived as troublesome if they speak their mind. Onsite therapists are often considered less intimidating since they are familiar to most workers. Onsite therapists are also trained to engage workers as active participants in decision-making, problem-solving and return-to-work planning. |

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