

daylight

# Back-to-Work mental health checklist

Whether you're coming back from annual leave, an extended leave of absence, or have been working from home, you can use this guide to protect your mental health as you head back to work.



## Let's face it: Going back to the office is a big transition

The day has finally come for you to return to the office. The thought of preparing for the great return might be a little daunting. You may feel out of practice with small talk or anxious about changing your routine. Everyone is different, and some may require more time to adjust. That's okay — this checklist can help you prepare for this transition with confidence.

### 3 weeks out

#### Get emotionally centred

Make time to process your feelings, understand your expectations, and create achievable goals. Continue to reflect on your feelings throughout the week, and be patient with yourself.

### 2 weeks out

#### Set yourself up for success by sharing your needs and boundaries with the people in your life

Let your people know how you are preparing for the return and what you need from them in order to make the transition smooth. This can include anything from working out childcare and pet sitting to meal planning and commuting schedules.

### 1 week out

#### Start to acclimate to your work sleep schedule

Any shift in our sleep schedule can cause added anxiety as we acclimate to our new normal. Sleep is imperative to our daily functioning — mentally, physically, and emotionally. If possible, take time to settle into your back-to-work sleep schedule, which includes factoring in things like commuting.

### 5 days out

#### Schedule self care and prioritise your wellbeing

This is a big one — try to do what makes you feel good. Spend time outside with the family, go for a walk, attend an exercise class, or go out for your favourite meal. Making time for activities that help you relax, even just a little, is important.

### 2 days out

#### Take time to mentally prep and practice self-compassion in these next few days

Recognise that everyone responds uniquely to stressors and changes in their lives. Remember that emotions are an important part of being human and provide a way for energy to move through our bodies. Be gentle with yourself.

### 1st day back

#### Take it slow by taking breaks

As your familiar routine fades away, keep in mind what worked well for you before, to create a new rhythm that fits. Set reminders to stretch, go for a walk, drink water, or have a snack.

You may miss your family, feel a little socially awkward, or miss the comfort of home. Take a break to honour your feelings and reflect without judgement.

### 1st week back

#### Check in with yourself, and seek support if you need it

Schedule time each week for a check-in with yourself on your progress. Repeated practices like these can help our brains readjust to change over time.

Ask for what you need from the people who are capable of providing. If you need help with managing your anxiety brought on by returning to work, consider seeking help - from someone you trust, a therapist, or by trying [Daylight](#).

## You've got this

Transitions can be tough. If you're feeling anxious about returning to work, know that you are not alone. Be good to yourself by taking care of yourself. Daylight is safe, effective, private, and available to you at no cost via our partnership with Scottish Government.

Daylight was developed by clinical psychologists and researchers who've spent decades studying anxiety. In just 10 minutes per day, you'll build life-long skills to reduce tension, re-frame anxious thoughts, and develop helpful behaviours.

## Get started today:

[Take me to Daylight](#)

