AOTA Returning to Work After an Injury

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After a person experiences an injury and has taken time off work to recover, he or she will need to go through a transition period when first returning to work. Transitional work is a step in the recovery process when a person is able to complete some job tasks but is not yet at full capacity. A transitional work program includes job coaching, instruction, and education in safe work practices to prevent further injury. The program usually includes a combination of job tasks that a worker is able to perform safely.

An occupational therapist trained in return-to-work services can evaluate a person’s ability to complete his or her job tasks and oversee a company’s return-to-work program. The goal of occupational therapy is to provide the returning worker with tasks that are meaningful and to facilitate the worker’s complete and total independence and function at work. A transitional work program also allows for the use of environmentally focused interventions that incorporate good, healthy ergonomic practices.

Information on the need of a transitional program as part of a return to work strategy…