

# Returning to Work After a Pandemic

The effects of COVID-19 has changed our lives in many ways. It has changed how we work, how we teach, how we learn, how we interact with one another and how we feel. Just when social distancing starts to feel “normal,” we may be heading back to work and out in the world again. So how do you bounce back after a pandemic?

If you’re going back to work, remember these tips:

- **Adjust to your routine.** If you are back to having a commute in the mornings, be sure to leave enough time to get ready and beat the traffic. Start adjusting your sleep schedule a few days before you go back if you need to.
- **Prepare for what you can.** Uncertainty may make you feel helpless – so focus on what you can control. Make a checklist of the supplies you need to go back to your office or workplace to put your best foot forward.
- **Ask questions.** Feeling anxious often comes from uncertainty. The more you know, the more comfortable you’ll feel. Talk to your boss about what to expect on your first day or week back.
- **Set boundaries.** You may experience some fear of exposure to the virus when you’re heading back to work. In addition to standard hygiene practices, it’s okay to keep a safe distance from others and not shake hands for a while.
- **Respect other people’s boundaries.** You should be kind and check in on others, but understand that some people may not want to talk about the virus or what’s in the news. Keep in mind that everyone copes differently.
- **Try not to isolate yourself** from others socially. While everyone may be keeping a safe physical distance, you can still lean on others for emotional support and friendship.
- **Prioritize self-care and compassion.** Treat yourself kindly and remember to take care of yourself. Proper stress management, rest and exercise will boost your ability to cope.
- **Share your good advice with others.** If you’ve found activities, tips or tricks that have helped you during this time, it might help someone else too.
- **Seek support.** If you’re struggling emotionally, physically, financially or in any other way due to the pandemic, you don’t need to cope alone. Reach out for help from your Employee Assistance Program, your behavioral health benefit or your community.

**New Directions is here for you.**

We’re available to support you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.