

# 'Spotlight on' series

## Returning to work after a period away

Returning to work after a break can feel overwhelming. Follow these tips to help regain confidence and update your skills during the transition.

### 1 Preparing for your return



**Notify your line manager well in advance** of your intended return date.

**Discuss and agree on a phased return plan** and/or KIT (Keep in Touch) days where appropriate.

**Review your skills** and identify areas for refresher training.

**Discuss flexible working options with your line manager** to balance personal and professional commitments. You'll need to apply for this several months before your return-to-work date.

### 2 Continuing professional development (CPD)



**Engage in CPD activities to rebuild knowledge.**

**Consider attending relevant conferences** and webinars to stay updated.

**Undertake courses and e-learning** to help maintain clinical knowledge eg RCR Learning Hub.

### 3 Adjusting to clinical work



**Consider starting with supervised sessions** to rebuild confidence in decision-making.

**Focus on areas of practice** that may have changed during your absence.

**Shadow colleagues to regain familiarity with procedures**, learn any new techniques and take up opportunities for simulation training if available.

**Engage in regular feedback sessions** with supervisors and colleagues.

### 4 Addressing wellbeing and support



**Reach out to peers, mentors, or local wellbeing champions for guidance.**

**Access occupational health support** if appropriate.

### 5 Key resources and contacts



**Explore the RCR's return-to-work toolkit** and support network.

**Join relevant specialty forums** to share experiences with peers.

**Contact your clinical lead (or educational supervisor for resident doctors)** for tailored advice.

**In England, resident doctors should contact their local NHSE training office website to access SupportTT** (Supported Return to Training).

**Trusts and health boards in devolved nations may have similar regional guidance and local schemes** which resident doctors can access.

#### Useful links

<https://www.rcr.ac.uk/exams-training/specialty-training/supported-return-to-training-supporttt/>

<https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/supporting-doctors-returning-training-after-time-out>

<https://www.bma.org.uk/advice-and-support/career-progression/finding-the-right-role/returning-to-clinical-practice-after-absence>

<https://heiw.nhs.wales/files/policies-and-procedures/heiw-medical-deanery-return-to-training-guidance-jan-21/>

<https://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/trainee-development-and-wellbeing-service/starting-and-returning-to-work/>

<https://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/trainee-development-and-wellbeing-service/starting-and-returning-to-work/returning-to-training-after-an-absence-guidance/>