

Returning to work after a Sabbatical

Starting a new job can be nerve racking, but returning to work after a sabbatical can be terrifying as well as exciting, liberating and challenging.

Reasons for Sabbaticals are varied and usually fairly personal. They may range from 6 months off to travel, to 10 years + career break to look after children as they grow up.

The first challenge is to find a job. An updated CV which demonstrates any voluntary work and transferrable skills gained during the sabbatical is essential to securing the right position in the right company for you.

If you have been out of work for a significant period of time, ensuring your IT skills are up to date and any relevant professional knowledge has been maintained is essential. An employer is unlikely to hire you as a doctor or a lawyer if you have been out of the workplace for a number of years and not undertaken refresher courses.

Your wardrobe may well need a makeover to ensure that you have appropriate clothes to wear. Jeans and trainers may be fine for helping out at a hospice, but are unlikely to be appropriate in an office. Find out what the dress code is before attending your interview, if in doubt, go smart. Then ensure you ask what the dress code is, if a uniform is provided or what colours they want you to wear. Review your wardrobe and buy 2 or 3 key pieces to start with, you don't need to have 20 shirts on day 1.

Check your journey to work and try it several different ways at the right time of the day. There is no point in trying a route at lunchtime if you are going to be doing it at 8am. Train and bus times vary and traffic conditions change throughout the day. You don't want to be late so make sure you have several options available to you in case of accidents, strikes or congestion.

Making a successful transition back into the workplace involves getting into the right frame of mind, getting your body clock reset and getting your support structures in place. Don't be afraid to ask for help and know what your limitations are, especially if you are going into a new field. Don't expect everything to be the same as it was when you left, especially if you are returning to the same company - life goes on and will have gone on without you - expect change and you may be pleasantly surprised.