

# Employment After Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)



After a spinal cord injury (SCI), you may wonder if you'll be able to find a job or work again. In fact, people with spinal cord injuries can and do return to work. You may be able to keep the job you had before. Or you may need to consider other choices. This includes changing fields, getting more education or job training, or learning new skills. No matter what your situation is, there are choices for you. Read on to learn more.

## Consider your choices

When thinking about your job choices, consider doing the following:

- If you currently have a job, meet with your employer:
  - Are there minor changes that can help you return to work?
  - Are there other positions in your company that are a good match for your skills and experience?
- Reevaluate your strengths:
  - Previous work experience
  - Education
  - Skills and abilities
- Research education and training opportunities:
  - College
  - Trade school
- Look at alternatives:
  - Changing careers
  - Volunteer work
- Get support:
  - Vocational rehabilitation counselor
  - Employment counselor
  - Peer counselor
  - Friends and family
  - Religious, social or community groups
  - Support groups

## Use vocational rehabilitation programs

Vocational rehabilitation programs are designed to help people with SCI or other disabilities find work. A trained counselor can:

- Assess your skills, interests, and abilities

- Help you set realistic job goals
- Help you with job training, education, job placement, and changes at your workplace

Ask your healthcare team to help you learn more about the services in your area. Or contact local or state services. Look online or in a phone book to find a program near you.

## Other ways to find work

You can also try other ways to find a job. These include:

- Telling family and friends that you're looking for a job
- Looking at job listings online
- Getting help through local job agencies
- Using resources at your public library

## Disability benefits

If you can't work, you may qualify for disability benefits. Even if you start working, you may be eligible for some benefits. Assistance from other federal or state programs may also be choices. Ask your healthcare team to tell you more about this.

## Know your rights: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA is a law that helps protect your job rights. It makes it illegal for an employer to deny you a job based on your disability. It also allows you to ask for reasonable changes to be made in your workplace to support you in doing your job.

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