

SQC Program

Release-To-Work Discussion Considerations

This tool is designed to help you, the surgeon, have a meaningful discussion with your patient regarding return to work, pain expectations, and goal setting. Returning to work is part of achieving maximal physical recovery. This discussion will encourage your patient to start a conversation with their employer about opportunities for light duty work or reduced hours.

As you know, it is important to set expectations for a good recovery and ensure patients understand the importance of doing their part. Please take a few minutes during an initial office visit to explain and document the following in your chart note:

Key Messages:

1. “You must help in your own recovery...”
 - Discuss and set post-op pain expectations and create a pain management plan.
 - What are the worker’s return to work goals post-surgery?
 - Does the worker have any fears or concerns?
 - Is the worker’s outlook on recovery positive or negative?

2. “Activity helps recovery...”
 - Some discomfort is normal when returning to activities after an injury. This is not harmful, and is different from pain that indicates a setback.
 - Incrementally increase the activity you do on a continual basis.
 - Does the worker have any fears or concerns towards pain?

3. “Early and safe return to work makes sense...”
 - **Heal while at work, not heal then go to work.**
 - Release and return to work is one of the goals of treatment.
 - Discuss pain and the expectations of working with pain.
 - Would the worker benefit from a [Progressive Goal Attainment Program \(PGAP\)](#)?
 - PGAP is a structured program. The worker meets weekly with an activity coach for a maximum of 10 sessions and sets their own goals.
 - Psychosocial barriers can negatively affect a worker’s recovery. PGAP is a tool used to address these via one on one coaching.