

CLINIC LOCATION

This program is offered at the **Michael G. DeGroot Pain Clinic** within the **McMaster University Medical Centre** located at:

1200 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario L8N 3Z5
Yellow Section, 4th Floor
T: 905-521-2100 ext. 44621 F: 905-577-8022
www.hhsc.ca/pain

Please visit the hospital website at
www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca for directions and parking.

REFERRAL INFORMATION

www.hhsc.ca/pain

CHRONIC PAIN AND WORK

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Being productive or working is an important part of being healthy and satisfied with your life. Even as a child, you had a natural desire to be productive and active. We learn to work while playing. You experience great psychological benefits from working, including the sense of accomplishment and the pleasure of having purpose and structure in one's day. Developing friendships, challenging yourself to learn new things, working towards advancement, and the physical demands of the job itself sometimes can be rewarding.

As a chronic pain sufferer, you may often worry about your working future.

You may be afraid that...

- People will think you are not trying or "faking it".
- If you try to return to work you will make yourself worse or be re-injured.
- You will not be able to give the same 100% as before and subsequently, feel like a failure.
- Co-workers or supervisors will not be accepting after an absence.
- If you return to work and fail, disability benefits will not be available and financial hardship will occur.

How will the program assist me?

The key is to become active and to concentrate on what you "can do" instead of what you "cannot do". You must be willing to try activities again such as performing household tasks, engaging in recreation and leisure activities with your family, volunteering, or perhaps taking a course at school. While "experimenting" with a variety of activities, you will be learning skills and strategies that will assist you in becoming more productive.

Return to Work Plan

Research studies have shown that individuals who return to work as soon as possible following an illness or injury experience better results than workers who delay their return.

In addition, our research has shown that if you develop a return to work plan you will have a better outcome than those who do not do this.

Coping with pain when returning to work

Pain will not simply disappear because you decide to return to work, but you will find that the quality of life will improve. If you return to work you will find that your ability to work gradually improves in the workplace. You will become accustomed again to work, become more physically fit for the job, and develop ways of performing your work skillfully.

The program staff will teach you pain control techniques such as pacing, scheduling, maintaining good physical posture, and improving your physical tolerance level. By applying these techniques and others in the workplace, tasks that initially seemed to be quite difficult or impossible begin to become quite manageable.

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Meeting demands of my existing vocation?

Many employers are willing and able to accommodate the injured worker. Gradual return to work is often possible. Experienced medical advice is available to guide both you and your employer on how to make the necessary vocational changes over the right length of time. Rather than relying on "job restrictions" what it is you can do and the more effective way to accomplish it. By appreciating and monitoring your limits you can gradually increase your work tolerance over time.

The purpose of being productive is to gain quality of life by meeting and balancing your needs for social, family, health, peace of mind, and productivity. In the Chronic Pain Program you gain support, information and an opportunity to practice ways to achieve these goals.