

# Working with a Chronic Condition

When you have a chronic condition, work can be a welcome change of focus on good days. At other times, you may find it hard to work when you feel unwell. Changing your lifestyle, knowing your limits and caring for yourself can help you manage your career and your condition. Here are 10 ways to do just that:

- 1. Pat yourself on the back.** At times, you may feel upset when you think of how much you could do “before you got sick.” Accept that you have limits now that weren’t there before. Give yourself credit for working another day with a chronic condition – no easy feat!
- 2. Take your breaks.** Although skipping your breaks may be tempting when work piles up, take some time to recharge.
- 3. Maintain lifestyle changes.** Try not to give up your daily walk, yoga or other changes that can improve your health. Take medicines and eat meals on time, even if you have to set a timer at work to jog your memory.
- 4. Find support.** Look for an online or in-person support group or an advocacy group for your condition. Reading about healing and talking to friends and family can also be great sources of support.
- 5. Seek out joy.** A chronic condition can drain you. Do things often that make you happy, even if they seem small, such as reading a good book or watching the sunset.
- 6. Plan ahead.** To make your week easier, try running errands, cooking meals and freezing food for the week during the weekend. When you’re working, you may have more energy on the weekend.
- 7. Ask for adjustments.** If your condition affects your ability to do your job, talk to your manager or Human Resources. Explain how your condition may affect your work, but be clear about the value you can add. Your manager or HR can work with you to make adjustments, such as providing special equipment, changing the lighting or reducing travel. If your company allows it, you may also be able to work from home, work part-time, switch departments or change your hours.
- 8. Know your rights.** Know your rights and your employer’s responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act. (<http://www.ada.gov>).
- 9. Recharge.** Chronic conditions can demand a lot of energy to manage. Meditation, painting, walking, and other restful activities can help you relax.
- 10. Call your EAP.** Talking to someone can relieve stress and help you find healthy ways to handle the demands of your job and your health. When you call your EAP, an intake representative can connect or refer you to a licensed professional who can help.

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## Need help?

Call toll-free, 24 hours a day, seven days a week:

(800) XXX-XXXX

TDD: (800) 327-0801

or visit us at: [members.mhn.com](http://members.mhn.com)

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