



Disability Duration Guidelines  
and  
Expected Healing Times

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## Disability Duration Guidelines Acknowledgement

The Workers Compensation Board of Prince Edward Island (WCB PEI) acknowledges the Workers Compensation Board of Alberta (WCB Alberta) and the members of its Medical Services staff who developed these Disability Duration Guidelines; and thanks to WCB Alberta for giving permission to use them on site.

Modifications to these guidelines have been made based upon WHSCC New Brunswick and WCB PEI experience and the recommendations of its medical and consulting staff.

## Disability Duration Guidelines Disclaimer

These Disability Duration Guidelines are not intended to provide strict rules for these conditions in all workers.

Disability duration may vary from these guidelines if, in the judgement of the treating physician or a Medical Advisor, variance is warranted:

1. to meet the health care needs of the worker;
2. to fall within generally accepted principles of the Prince Edward Island health care community.

These guidelines are specific to the injured part (e.g. fracture, tendon rupture, etc.) yet take into account that the worker need not lose time away from work if modified or alternate job duties are available or work duties may be safely performed using uninjured limbs, without compromising treatment.

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# Introduction and Use

These disability duration guidelines were initially prepared by Workers Compensation Board of Alberta Medical Services and modified by WHSCC New Brunswick Medical Services and Workers Compensation Board of Prince Edward Island to assist clinicians, case managers and medical advisors with clinical management of claims.

## **Disability Duration Guidelines vs. Healing Times**

'Disability duration' is not the same as 'healing time'. 'Disability duration' refers to the interval of time from accident to when 75% of persons are able to return to pre-accident work. The disability duration of an injury is often shorter than the healing time. For example, the disability duration for strains and sprains is 3 to 4 weeks. The healing time is 12 weeks. For information on healing times see the section "Expected Healing Times".

## **Return to Work**

The guidelines give an estimate of the approximate time required for workers to return to work after various work-related injuries and treatments. It should be emphasized that the maximum time given is not necessarily a definite RTW date, but rather the time when questions should be asked as to why the worker has not returned to work (see Factors Influencing Disability Duration). The questions may be answered by medical reporting, discussion with the treating physician or it may be necessary to call the worker in for an independent examination. These guidelines are specific to the injured part (e.g. fracture, tendon rupture, etc.) yet take into account that the worker need not lose time away from work if modified or alternate job duties are available or work duties may be safely performed using uninjured limbs, without compromising treatment.

## **Recovery Time**

Many factors influence recovery time (e.g., psychosocial considerations, age, associated medical conditions, complications, and treatment including surgery and medications). It is important that these are taken into account when using these guidelines. Refer to "Factors Influencing Disability Duration" section for more information.

These guidelines were prepared from information which includes the following sources:

- The Medical Disability Advisor - Workplace Guidelines for Disability Duration by Presley Reed, M.D., Second Edition, 1994; and Third Edition, 1997.
- WCB Alberta experience
- WHSCC New Brunswick experience
- WCB PEI experience

# Section 1: Expected Healing Times

## INTRODUCTION

Healing time is the generally expected interval of time for physiological wound repair, following an injury or surgery. Disability time/duration refers to the generally expected maximal interval of time, for a given level of physical job demands (Reed, 1994), within which the worker should have regained pre-accident or pre-surgical functional ability. Healing Time is always longer than disability duration time.

When a worker reaches the expected healing time for his/her injury, but continues to be disabled and to complain of pain, he/she should be considered as a potential chronic pain disability sufferer.

There are 2 sets of tables for expected healing times:

Table 1. General Expected Healing Times

Table 2. Post-Surgical Healing Times

**Table 1. GENERAL EXPECTED HEALING TIMES**

<b>Soft Tissue Injuries</b>	
Soft tissue injuries	3 months
Knee ligament injuries	3 months
Herniated disc - conservative treatment	3-6 months
<b>Fractures</b>	
Complex facial fractures	4-6 months
Upper limb	3-6 months
Hand fractures	3-6 months
Simple, vertebral, body compression - all levels	3-6 months
Spinal fractures/dislocations	12 months
Pelvis - no reduction	3-6 months
Pelvis - with reduction	12 months
Femur and hip fractures	6-12 months
Tibial fractures	6-9 months
Other lower limb and foot fractures	3-6 months

Complex and/or complicated fractures	6 months
Fracture dislocations of major joints (including wrist and ankle)	6 months
<b>Infections</b>	
Osteomyelitis	4-8 months
<b>Injuries to the Nervous System</b>	
Peripheral nerve injuries	3-12 months
Minor head injuries	3 months
Brain injuries with persisting neurological deficit	1 year
Spinal cord and cauda equina injuries	1 year

**Table 2. POST-SURGICAL HEALING TIMES**

<b>Shoulder</b>	
Arthroscopic Acromioplasty	4 months
Most other shoulder operations	3-6 months
<b>Knee</b>	
Arthroscopy	3-6 weeks
Arthrotomy	3 months
Ligament repair	3-6 months
<b>Ankle</b>	
Ligament repair	3-6 months
<b>Spine</b>	
Discectomy	3-6 months
Spinal fusion	6-12 months
Spinal stenosis decompression	3-12 months
<b>Nervous System</b>	
Major nerve repair	6-12 months
Minor nerve repair	4-5 months
Carpal tunnel or other nerve release	3 months

<b>Tendon</b>	
Flexor tendon repair or tendon transfer	3-6 months
Extensor tendon repair	3 months
Tendon release	3 months
<b>Amputations</b>	
Amputations - upper	3-6 months
Amputations - lower	3-12 months
<b>Reconstruction</b>	
Digital re-implantation	6-9 months



## Section 2: Disability Duration Guidelines

### 1. Factors Influencing Duration and Disability

#### A. General Factors

Some important factors that may influence duration of disability include:

#### **Psychological Factors**

- motivation to return to work
- attitude of employer towards employee
- availability of co-worker to help out
- pre-existing psychological condition(s), e.g., somatization, depression
- prior experience with injury/illness
- belief that non-specific pain is harmful
- dependence on others to do things for them (external locus of control)
- fear-avoidance behaviour
- job dissatisfaction

#### **Age**

- age may contribute to the course/progress of recovery /healing

#### **Complications**

- medical complications resulting from the primary condition and/or subsequent therapeutic procedures

#### **Medication**

- medications can restrict the type of work an individual can safely perform

## **Individual Variation**

There may be different durations of disability among workers with the same injury/illness or undergoing the same treatment because of:

- severity of the condition
- multiple areas involved
- individual response to treatment
- the course of recovery
- late diagnosis
- whether treatment is medical or surgical
- presence of pre-existing or personal condition(s) (e.g., spondylolysis, osteoarthritis)

## **Other factors**

- primary care physician fails to establish expectation early on that the patient will be able to get back to some form of work in the future
- multiple workers' compensation claims
- litigation for personal conditions
- expectation that passive treatment rather than active participation in treatment is best approach
- language or communication barriers
- lack of modified or transitional work
- participates in hobbies that involve the injured area

## **B. Fractures**

### **Factors that may influence duration of disability:**

- age
- the specific fracture
- the stability of the fracture
- direction and degree of displacement
- degree of comminution
- extent of articular damage

- severity of associated soft tissue injury (nerves, blood vessels, tendons and ligaments)
- promptness, method and adequacy of treatment
- duration of immobilization
- presence of complications
- surgical treatment
- life style/occupational requirements
- pre-existing or incidental condition(s) e.g. osteoporosis

### C. Dislocations

#### **Factor that may influence duration of disability:**

- which joint is involved
- direction and degree of displacement
- severity of associated damage to ligaments, tendons, or articular surfaces
- neurovascular damage
- type and promptness of treatment
- life style/occupational requirements
- pre-existing or incidental condition(s)

### D. Sprains and Strains

#### **Factor that may influence duration of disability:**

- severity of the injury
- location
- need for surgical repair
- timing of surgical repair
- promptness of treatment
- life style/occupational requirements
- pre-existing or incidental condition(s)

## E. Amputations

### **Factors that may influence duration of disability:**

an underlying disease process

the particular limb or digit amputated

whether dominant or non-dominant hand/arm is involved

complications

life style/occupational requirements

pre-existing or incidental condition(s)

## F. Procedures

### **Factors that may influence duration of disability:**

- the condition for which the procedure is done
- whether dominant or non-dominant hand/arm is involved
- complications
- joint involved
- lifestyle/occupational requirements
- pre-existing or incidental condition(s)

## 2. Disability Duration Guidelines Job Classifications

The job classifications in the tables are taken from the U.S. Department of Labor's Dictionary of Occupational Titles, and are comparable to those classifications as found in the National Occupational Classification Career Handbook (NOC-CH).

### **Job Classifications**

**SEDENTARY WORK** - Exerting up to 10 pounds of force occasionally and/or a negligible amount of force frequently or constantly to lift, carry, push, pull or otherwise move objects, including the human body. Sedentary work involves sitting most of the time, but may involve walking or standing for brief periods of time. Jobs are sedentary if walking and standing are required only occasionally and all other sedentary criteria are met.

**LIGHT WORK** - Exerting up to 20 pounds of force occasionally and/or up to 10 pounds of force frequently, and/or negligible amount of force constantly to move objects. Physical demand requirements are in excess of those for sedentary work. Light work usually requires walking or standing to a significant degree. However, if the use of the arm and/or leg controls require exertion of forces greater than that for sedentary work, and the worker sits most of the time, the job is rated light work.

**MEDIUM WORK** - Exerting up to 50 pounds of force occasionally, and/or up to 20 pounds of force frequently, and/or up to 10 pounds of force constantly to move objects.

**HEAVY WORK** - Exerting up to 100 pounds of force occasionally, and/or up to 50 pounds of force frequently, and/or up to 20 pounds of force constantly to move objects.

**VERY HEAVY WORK** - Exerting in excess of 100 pounds of force occasionally, and/or in excess of 50 pounds of force frequently, and/or in excess of 20 pounds of force constantly to move objects.

## General Miscellaneous Soft Tissue Injuries

### Bursitis:

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 day - 2 weeks
Light Work	0 day - 3 weeks
Medium Work	1 week - 4 weeks
Heavy Work	1 week - 6 weeks
Very Heavy	1 week - 8 weeks

### Open Wounds:

Simple:	
Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 days - 2 weeks
Light Work	0 days - 2 weeks
Medium Work	1 week - 2 weeks
Heavy Work	1 week - 2 weeks
Very Heavy Work	1 week - 2 weeks
Complex:	
Job Classifications	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	by report
Light Work	by report
Medium Work	by report
Heavy Work	by report
Very Heavy Work	by report

**Contusion: usually not disabling**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 days - 2 weeks
Light Work	0 days - 2 weeks
Medium Work	0 days - 2 weeks
Heavy Work	0 days - 2 weeks
Very Heavy	0 days - 2 weeks

**Crash Injury:**

Job Classification	RTW Maximum/Minimum by report if return to work more than 4 weeks
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**Complications of Trauma or Surgical Procedures**

Deep vein thrombosis

Pulmonary embolus

Fat embolus

Infection

**Nerve Injuries of Extremities:**

There are usually other injuries involved with major nerve injuries (i.e. crush injury). The return to work date will often depend on the severity of the combined injuries. Permanent clinical impairment would be anticipated, but should not be assessed before at least 24 months post injury or post last surgery.

Medical Advisor referral imperative.

# General Procedures

## **Arthroscopy - Diagnostic:**

Job Classification	RTW
	Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	1 day - 1 week
Light Work	1 day - 2 weeks
Medium Work	1 day - 2 weeks
Heavy Work	1 day - 2 weeks
Very Heavy	1 day - 2 weeks



## Disability Duration Guidelines Upper Extremity Fractures

### Clavicle: shaft

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 days - 4 weeks
Light Work	1 week - 4 weeks
Medium Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Heavy Work	6 weeks - 8 weeks
Very Heavy Work	6 weeks- 8 weeks

### Scapula:

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 days - 4 weeks
Light Work	1 week - 4 weeks
Medium Work	2 weeks - 6 weeks
Heavy Work	4 weeks - 8 weeks
Very Heavy Work	6 weeks - 10 weeks

### Humerus:

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	3 weeks - 6 weeks
Light Work	3 weeks - 6 weeks
Medium Work	3 weeks - 8 weeks
Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Very Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks

**Elbow:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	3 weeks - 6 weeks
Light Work	3 weeks - 6 weeks
Medium Work	3 weeks - 8 weeks
Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Very Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks

**Radius: shaft**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	1 week - 4 weeks
Light Work	3 weeks - 8 weeks
Medium Work	4 weeks - 8 weeks
Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Very Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks

**Ulna: shaft**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	1 week - 4 weeks
Light Work	1 weeks - 8 weeks
Medium Work	4 weeks - 8 weeks
Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Very Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks

**Radius and Ulna: shaft**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	1 week - 4 weeks
Light Work	2 weeks - 10 weeks
Medium Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Heavy Work	12 weeks - 16 weeks
Very Heavy Work	12 weeks - 16 weeks

**Colles Fracture:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	1 week - 4 weeks
Light Work	2 weeks - 8 weeks
Medium Work	4 weeks - 8 weeks
Heavy Work	8 weeks - 16 weeks
Very Heavy Work	10 weeks - 16 weeks

**Carpal Bones: excluding scaphoid**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 days - 4 weeks
Light Work	1 weeks - 8 weeks
Medium Work	1 weeks - 8 weeks
Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Very Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks

**Scaphoid Bone:** (any evidence of avascular necrosis/nonunion requires Medical Advisor opinion)

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 days - 4 weeks
Light Work	2 weeks - 8 weeks
Medium Work	4 weeks - 10 weeks
Heavy Work	12 weeks - 16 weeks
Very Heavy Work	12 weeks - 16 weeks

**Metacarpal Bones**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 days - 2 weeks
Light Work	2 weeks - 4 weeks
Medium Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Heavy Work	6 weeks - 12 weeks
Very Heavy Work	6 weeks - 12 weeks

**Phalanges**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 days - 1 week
Light Work	1 week - 3 weeks
Medium Work	2 weeks - 6 weeks
Heavy Work	4 weeks - 8 weeks
Very Heavy Work	4 weeks - 8 weeks

## Disability Duration Guidelines Upper Extremity Dislocations

### Acromioclavicular (AC) Joint and Sternoclavicular (SC) Joint:

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum *
Sedentary Work	0 days- 3 weeks
Light Work	0 days- 4 weeks
Medium Work	2 weeks- 6 weeks
Heavy Work	3 weeks - 8 weeks
Very Heavy Work	4 weeks- 8 weeks
	* Includes all sprains (Grade I-III) treated non-surgically.

### Glenohumeral Joint: traumatic anterior and posterior and first time dislocation (different for multidirectional instability and for multiple dislocations)

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 days- 2 weeks
Light Work	1 week - 4 weeks
Medium Work	1 week - 4 weeks
Heavy Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Very Heavy Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks

**Elbow:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	1 week - 3 weeks
Light Work	2 weeks - 6 weeks
Medium Work	4 weeks - 8 weeks
Heavy Work	6 weeks - 10 weeks
Very Heavy Work	6 weeks- 12 weeks

**Wrist: includes distal radial ulnar joint**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	3 days- 2 weeks
Light Work	1 week - 4 weeks
Medium Work	2 weeks- 6 weeks
Heavy Work	by report
Very Heavy Work	by report

**Finger or Thumb Joints: interphalangeal joints (all) and distal interphalangeal (DIP) and proximal interphalangeal (PIP) joints of the finger**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 days - 1 week
Light Work	0 days - 2 weeks
Medium Work	1 week - 3 weeks
Heavy Work	1 week - 4 weeks
Very Heavy Work	1 week - 4 weeks

**Metacarpophalangeal (MCP) Joint(s):**

Requires Medical Advisor opinion

**Glenohumeral Joint Instability: recurrent dislocation and/or subluxation**

JOB CLASSIFICATION	RTW
	Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary/ Light Work	0 days - 2 weeks
Medium Work	1 week - 3 weeks
Heavy/Very Heavy Work	1 week - 4 weeks

## Disability Duration Guidelines Upper Extremity Soft Tissue Injuries

### Shoulder/Wrist/Elbow/Fingers:

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 days - 3 weeks
Light Work	0 days - 3 weeks
Medium Work	1 week - 4 weeks
Heavy Work	2 weeks - 4 weeks
Very Heavy Work	2 weeks- 4 weeks

### Tendinitis, Epicondylitis: medial/lateral

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 days- 3 weeks
Light Work	0 days- 3 weeks
Medium Work	1 week - 4 weeks
Heavy Work	2 weeks - 6 weeks
Very Heavy Work	2 weeks- 8 weeks



**Thumb: including sprain to media/lateral ligament**

Job Classification	RTW
	Minimum/Maximum *
Sedentary/Medium work	0 days - 6 weeks
Heavy/Very Heavy Work	1 week - 8 weeks
	* Depends on joint injured, severity and whether dominant or non-dominant hand is involved

**Biceps Tendinitis: long head**

Job Classification	RTW
	Minimum/Maximum *
Sedentary/ Light Work	0 days - 3 weeks
Medium Work	0 days - 4 weeks
Heavy/Very Heavy Work	4 weeks - 12 weeks
	*Depends on severity of symptoms, whether dominant and extremity involved.

**Rotator Cuff Tendinitis/Strain: 1st to 3rd degree**

Job Classification	RTW
	Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 days - 4 days
Light Work	0 days - 1 week
Medium Work	2 weeks - 6 weeks
Heavy Work	4 weeks - 12 weeks
Very Heavy Work	4 weeks- 12 weeks

## Disability Duration Guidelines Upper Extremity Amputations

### Finger: any level

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 days - 2 weeks
Light Work	0 days - 2 weeks
Medium Work	2 weeks - 4 weeks
Heavy Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Very Heavy Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks

### Thumb: Interphalangeal (IP)

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 days - 2 weeks
Light Work	2 days - 4 weeks
Medium Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Heavy Work	6 weeks - 8 weeks
Very Heavy Work	6 weeks - 8 weeks

### Thumb: Total

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	2 weeks - 4 weeks
Light Work	3 weeks - 4 weeks
Medium Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Heavy Work	by assessment
Very Heavy Work	by assessment

## Disability Duration Guidelines Upper Extremity Miscellaneous

### **Carpal Tunnel Syndrome: no surgery**

Need for layoff/return to work would be based on Doctor's reports and whether modified, non-repetitive duties are available.

## Disability Duration Guidelines Upper Extremity Procedures

### Tendon Repairs / Transfers

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	2 weeks - 4 weeks
Light Work	2 weeks - 6 weeks
Medium Work	4 weeks - 8 weeks
Heavy Work	4 weeks - 8 weeks
Very Heavy Work	6 weeks - 12 weeks

### Tenolysis / Tendon Releases:

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	2 weeks - 4 weeks
Light Work	2 weeks - 4 weeks
Medium Work	3 weeks - 6 weeks
Heavy Work	3 weeks - 6 weeks
Very Heavy Work	4 weeks - 8 weeks

### Repair of Rotator Cuff and/or Biceps Tendon Tear(s): arthroscopic or open arthrotomy

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum *
Sedentary Work / Light Work	1 week - 3 weeks
Medium Work	4 weeks - 8 weeks
Heavy Work / Very Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
	* Disability may be permanent if work requires arms overhead

**Decompression Surgery for Impingement syndrome: arthroscopic or open arthrotomy**

Job Classification	RTW
	Minimum/Maximum *
Sedentary Work / Light Work	2 weeks - 4 weeks
Medium Work	6 weeks - 12 weeks
Heavy Work / Very Heavy Work	12 weeks - 16 weeks
	* Disability may be permanent if work requires arms overhead

**Radial Head / Neck Resection: primary radial head/neck resection for fracture**

Job Classification	RTW
	Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	3 weeks
Light Work	6 weeks
Medium Work	8 weeks
Heavy Work	12 weeks
Very Heavy Work	12 weeks

**Ulnar Nerve Transposition:**

Job Classification	RTW
	Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	4 weeks
Light Work	4 weeks
Medium Work	6 weeks
Heavy Work	6 weeks
Very Heavy Work	6 weeks

**Shoulder Repair - Glenohumeral Dislocation:recurrent**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	2 weeks - 4 weeks
Light Work	3 weeks - 6 weeks
Medium Work	4 weeks - 8 weeks
Heavy Work	6 weeks - 10 weeks
Very Heavy Work	Unlikely to return to very heavy work

**Carpal Tunnel Release:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 days - 3 weeks
Light Work	0 days - 3 weeks
Medium Work	0 days - 3 weeks
Heavy Work	3 weeks - 6 weeks
Very Heavy Work	3 weeks - 6 weeks

**Carpal Fusion:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Light Work	12 weeks - 16 weeks
Medium Work	12 weeks - 16 weeks
Heavy Work	6 months - probably not advisable
Very Heavy Work	6 months - probably not advisable

**Fusion of Metacarpal - Phalangeal (MP) Joint of Thumb:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	6 weeks - 10 weeks
Light Work	6 weeks - 10 weeks
Medium Work	10 weeks - 14 weeks
Heavy Work	18 weeks
Very Heavy Work	18 weeks

**Fusion of Interphalangeal Joints of Finger and Thumb:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	1 week - 6 weeks
Light Work	1 week - 6 weeks
Medium Work	4 weeks - 8 weeks
Heavy Work	8 weeks - 10 weeks
Very Heavy Work	8 weeks - 10 weeks

**Acromioclavicular (AC) Excision (Mumford):**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	2 weeks - 4 weeks
Light Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Medium Work	6 weeks - 8 weeks
Heavy Work	8 weeks - 10 weeks
Very Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks

**Acromioclavicular (AC) Joint Surgical Reduction : (Grade IV - V ACJ Separation)**

Job Classification	RTW
	Minimum/Maximum *
Sedentary Work	2 weeks - 8 weeks
Light Work	6 weeks - 8 weeks
Medium Work	8 weeks - 10 weeks
Heavy Work	10 weeks - 12 weeks
Very Heavy Work	10 weeks - 12 weeks
	*Injured arm should be relatively immobile for 6 weeks to allow for good soft tissue healing.



## Disability Duration Guidelines Lower Extremity Fractures

### Pelvis:

#### Minor Fracture: stable pelvic ring or avulsions not including pelvis ring

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	2 weeks - 10 weeks
Light Work	4 weeks - 12 weeks
Medium Work	4 weeks - 16 weeks
Heavy Work	4 weeks - 20 weeks
Very Heavy Work	4 weeks - 20 weeks

#### Major Fractures: unstable/serious complications

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum by report

### Acetabulum:

#### Undisplaced:

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	8 weeks - 13 weeks
Light Work	10 weeks - 16 weeks
Medium Work	10 weeks - 16 weeks
Heavy Work	by report
Very Heavy Work	by report

**Acetabulum (continued)**

**Displaced:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum by report
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**Hip: head, neck including subtrochanter region**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	4 weeks - 12 weeks
Light Work	8 weeks - 16 weeks
Medium Work	8 weeks - 16 weeks
Heavy Work	12 weeks - 24 weeks
Very Heavy Work	by report

**Femur: shaft**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	4 weeks - 12 weeks
Light Work	12 weeks - 16 weeks
Medium Work	12 weeks - 16 weeks
Heavy Work	12 weeks - 16 weeks
Very Heavy Work	20 weeks - 26 weeks

**Intra-Articular Fractures of the knee: distal femur and proximal tibia**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Light Work	20 weeks - 26 weeks
Medium Work	24 weeks - 36 weeks
Heavy Work	by report
Very Heavy Work	by report

**Patella:**

**Displaced: surgical reduction**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	2 weeks - 4 weeks
Light Work	2 weeks - 6 weeks
Medium Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Very Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks

**Tibia: shaft**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Light Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Medium Work	14 weeks - 16 weeks
Heavy Work	20 weeks - 26 weeks
Very Heavy Work	by report

**Fibula: shaft**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	1 week - 2 weeks
Light Work	1 week - 4 weeks
Medium Work	6 weeks
Heavy Work	6 weeks
Very Heavy Work	6 weeks

**Ankle: Stable****Unimalleolar: Lateral or medial malleolus (excluding flake fractures)**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	1 week - 4 weeks
Light Work	1 week - 4 weeks
Medium Work	8 weeks - 10 weeks
Heavy Work	8 weeks - 10 weeks
Very Heavy Work	8 weeks - 10 weeks

**Ankle: Unstable**

**Bimalleolar:Bimalleolar:Bimalleolar:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Light Work	6 weeks - 12 weeks
Medium Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Very Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks

**Trimalleolar:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Light Work	6 weeks - 12 weeks
Medium Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Very Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks

**Trimalleolar with diastasis of the inferior tibiofibular joint:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	6 weeks - 8 weeks
Light Work	8 weeks - 14 weeks
Medium Work	12 weeks - 24 weeks
Heavy Work	12 weeks - 24 weeks
Very Heavy Work	12 weeks - 24 weeks

**Talus:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	3 weeks - 6 weeks
Light Work	12 weeks - 24 weeks
Medium Work	12 weeks - 26 weeks
Heavy Work	by report
Very Heavy Work	by report

**Calcaneum: os calcis****Undisplaced:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	3 weeks - 6 weeks
Light Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Medium Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Very Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks

**Calcaneum: os calcis (continued)**

**Displaced:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	6 weeks - 12 weeks
Light Work	12 weeks - 26 weeks
Medium Work	12 weeks - 26 weeks
Heavy Work	by report
Very Heavy Work	by report

**Tarsal Bones: excluding talus and os calcis**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	3 weeks - 6 weeks
Light Work	8 weeks - 10 weeks
Medium Work	8 weeks - 16 weeks
Heavy Work	8 weeks - 16 weeks
Very Heavy Work	8 weeks - 16 weeks

**Metatarsal:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 weeks - 1 week
Light Work	0 weeks - 3 weeks
Medium Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Very Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks

**Toes: lesser**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 weeks
Light Work	0 weeks - 1 week
Medium Work	2 weeks - 3 weeks
Heavy Work	2 weeks - 5 weeks
Very Heavy Work	2 weeks - 5 weeks

**Toes: great**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 weeks
Light Work	1 week - 2 weeks
Medium Work	2 weeks - 3 weeks
Heavy Work	3 weeks - 5 weeks
Very Heavy Work	3 weeks - 5 weeks



## Disability Duration Guidelines Lower Extremity Dislocations

### Hip Joint:

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	4 weeks - 12 weeks
Light Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Medium Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Very Heavy Work	by report

### Knee Joint:

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	by report
Light Work	by report
Medium Work	by report
Heavy Work	by report
Very Heavy Work	by report

### Patella:

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	
Light Work	1 weeks - 3 weeks
Medium Work	3 weeks - 6 weeks
Heavy Work	6 weeks - 8 weeks
Very Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
	8 weeks - 12 weeks

**Tarso-Metatarsal Joint:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	3 weeks - 6 weeks
Light Work	3 weeks - 6 weeks
Medium Work	6 weeks - 8 weeks
Heavy Work	8 weeks - 10 weeks
Very Heavy Work	by report

**Toes:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 weeks - 1 weeks
Light Work	0 weeks - 3 weeks
Medium Work	0 weeks - 3 weeks
Heavy Work	0 weeks - 3 weeks
Very Heavy Work	3 weeks - 5 weeks

# Disability Duration Guidelines Lower Extremity Soft Tissue Injuries

## **Knee:**

### **medial and lateral colleteral ligaments:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 weeks - 1 week
Light Work	0 weeks - 2 weeks
Medium Work	2 week - 8 weeks
Heavy Work	2 weeks - 8 weeks
Very Heavy Work	2 weeks- 12 weeks

### **Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) Tear (without surgery) an Tar (PCL):**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	3 weeks - 4 weeks
Light Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Medium Work	6 weeks - 8 weeks
Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Very Heavy Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks

**Ankle: without chronic instability**

Job Classification	RTW
	Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 days - 3 days
Light Work	10 days - 3 weeks
Medium Work	10 days - 3 weeks
Heavy Work	3 weeks - 6 weeks
Very Heavy Work	3 weeks - 6 weeks

# Disability Duration Guidelines Lower Extremity Amputations

## Hip Disarticulation:

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	3 months - 1 year
Light Work	by report
Medium Work	by report
Heavy Work	by report
Very Heavy Work	by report

## Above Knee

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	12 weeks - 30 weeks
Light Work	12 weeks - 30 weeks
Medium Work	by report
Heavy Work	by report
Very Heavy Work	by report

## Below Knee:

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	12 weeks - 26 weeks
Light Work	12 weeks - 26 weeks
Medium Work	18 weeks - 26 weeks
Heavy Work	18 weeks - 26 weeks
Very Heavy Work	18 weeks - 26 weeks

**Foot - Mid-Metatarsal Amputation:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	
Light Work	6 weeks - 8 weeks
Medium Work	6 weeks - 8 weeks
Heavy Work	by report
Very Heavy Work	by report

**All Toes at Metatarsophalangeal Joint:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	4 weeks - 8 weeks
Light Work	8 weeks - 10 weeks
Medium Work	10 weeks - 14 weeks
Heavy Work	by report
Very Heavy Work	by report

**Great Toe:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	2 weeks - 4 weeks
Light Work	4 weeks - 5 weeks
Medium Work	6 weeks - 8 weeks
Heavy Work	by report
Very Heavy Work	by report

**Lesser Toe: single**

Job Classification	RTW
	Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	1 weeks - 2 weeks
Light Work	3 weeks - 4 weeks
Medium Work	4 weeks
Heavy Work	4 weeks
Very Heavy Work	4 weeks

## Disability Duration Guidelines Lower Extremity Miscellaneous

### **Achilles Tendon Rupture: for surgical and nonsurgical intervention**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	2 weeks - 4 weeks
Light Work	8 weeks - 10 weeks
Medium Work	10 weeks - 12 weeks
Heavy Work	14 weeks - 16 weeks
Very Heavy Work	14 weeks - 16 weeks

### **Plantar Fasciitis:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 days - 1 week
Light Work	2 weeks - 3 weeks
Medium Work	2 weeks - 3 weeks
Heavy Work	2 weeks - 3 weeks
Very Heavy Work	2 weeks - 3 weeks



## Disability Duration Guidelines Lower Extremity Procedures

### **Meniscectomy: partial to total meniscal removal**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	1 weeks - 2 weeks
Light Work	2 weeks - 4 weeks
Medium Work	2 weeks - 4 weeks
Heavy Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Very Heavy Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks

### **Meniscal Repair: suture repair of meniscal tear (combined arthroscopy and arthrotomy)**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	2 weeks - 3 weeks
Light Work	6 weeks - 8 weeks
Medium Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Heavy Work	12 weeks - 24 weeks
Very Heavy Work	12 weeks - 24 weeks

### **Lateral Retinacular Release: recurrent patellar dislocation**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	3 days - 1 weeks
Light Work	2 weeks - 3 weeks
Medium Work	2 weeks - 3 weeks
Heavy Work	2 weeks - 3 weeks
Very Heavy Work	based on primary injury

**Patellectomy:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	2 weeks - 4 weeks
Light Work	2 weeks - 6 weeks
Medium Work	3 weeks - 8 weeks
Heavy Work	6 weeks or by report
Very Heavy Work	6 weeks or by report

**Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) Reconstruction/Replacement:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	
Light Work	3 weeks - 6 weeks
Medium Work	4 weeks - 12 weeks
Heavy Work	12 weeks - 24 weeks
Very Heavy Work	by report *
	*Return to very heavy repetitive work may take 9-12 months.
	**Functional brace may/will be required for heavy and very heavy work and for medium work on uneven terrain and/or rotational activity.

**Ankle Ligament Reconstruction (Evans Repair):**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	2 weeks - 4 weeks
Light Work	6 weeks - 8 weeks
Medium Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Heavy Work	8 weeks - 14 weeks
Very Heavy Work	12 weeks - 16 weeks

**Hip Replacement:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	3 weeks - 6 weeks
Light Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Medium Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Heavy Work	by report
Very Heavy Work	by report

**Osteotomy of Tibia: requires Medical Advisor review**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Light Work	6 weeks - 8 weeks
Medium Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Heavy Work	12 weeks - 24 weeks
Very Heavy Work	12 weeks - 24 weeks

**Arthroplasty of Knee / Total Knee Replacement:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Light Work	12 weeks - 16 weeks
Medium Work	12 weeks - 20 weeks
Heavy Work	by report
Very Heavy Work	by report

**Ankle Fusion:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Light Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Sedentary Work	12 weeks - 16 weeks
Medium Work	12 weeks - 16 weeks
Heavy Work	by report
Very Heavy Work	by report

## Disability Duration Guidelines Head/Trunk/Spine Fractures

### Skull: Simple fracture

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	2 weeks - 4 weeks
Light Work	2 weeks - 6 weeks
Medium Work	4 weeks - 8 weeks
Heavy Work	by report
Very Heavy Work	by report

### Skull : Compound, comminuted or depressed fracture

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum by report

### Maxilla:

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	1 week - 3 weeks
Light Work	1 week - 3 weeks
Medium Work	1 week - 3 weeks
Heavy Work	1 week - 3 weeks
Very Heavy Work	1 week - 3 weeks
	If job requires verbal communication, modified duties may be required. Minimum return to work 1 week for all levels.

**Mandible:**

For fracture management of jaw bone refer to Head/Trunk/Spine Surgical/Therapeutic/Diagnostic Procedures section.

**Nose:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 days - 1 week
Light Work	0 days - 1 week
Medium Work	0 days - 1 week
Heavy Work	0 days - 2 weeks
Very Heavy Work	0 days - 2 weeks

**Ribs: Single or Multiple**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 days - 2 weeks
Light Work	1 week - 4 weeks
Medium Work	2 weeks - 6 weeks
Heavy Work	6 weeks - 10 weeks
Very Heavy Work	6 weeks - 10 weeks

**Sternum:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	1 week - 3 weeks
Light Work	1 week - 4 weeks
Medium Work	2 weeks - 6 weeks
Heavy Work	4 weeks - 8 weeks
Very Heavy Work	6 weeks - 8 weeks

**Vertebrae: non-vertebral body: e.g. spinous process, transverse processes**

**I. Single Level Fractures**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 weeks - 2 weeks
Light Work	0 weeks - 2 weeks
Medium Work	3 weeks - 4 weeks
Heavy Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Very Heavy Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks

**II. Multiple Level Fractures**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
	Medical Advisor opinion based on medical reporting if lay off exceeds 10 weeks

**Compression Fractures: vertebral bodies (Requires Medical Advisor review)**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	2 weeks - 8 weeks
Light Work	2 week - 10 weeks
Medium Work	8 weeks - 12 weeks
Heavy Work/Very Heavy Work	Medical Advisor opinion based on medical reporting

## Disability Duration Guidelines Head/Trunk/Spine Dislocations and Subluxations

### Temporomandibular Joint(s): TMJ

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 days - 1 week
Light Work	0 days - 1 week
Medium Work	0 days - 1 week
Heavy Work	0 days - 1 week
Very Heavy Work	0 days - 1 week

### Spondyloysis, Spondylolisthesis:

Medical Advisor referral necessary if layoff exceeds 3 weeks (otherwise see lumbosacral sprain)



# Disability Duration Guidelines Head/Trunk/Spine Soft Tissue Injuries

## **Temporomandibular Joint Disorders (TMJD):**

No time loss from work usually anticipated

## **Cervical: e.g. Whiplash or non-whiplash soft tissue injuries**

**without nerve root involvement** (Whiplash Associated Disorders “WAD” I and II)

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 weeks - 1 weeks
Light Work	0 weeks - 2 weeks
Medium Work	0 weeks - 4 weeks
Heavy Work/Very Heavy Work	Medical Advisor opinion based on medical reporting if lay off exceeds 6 weeks

## **Lumbosacral:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 weeks - 1 weeks
Light Work	0 weeks - 2 weeks
Medium Work	0 weeks - 4 weeks
Heavy Work	0 weeks - 4 weeks
Very Heavy	0 weeks - 4 weeks

**Sacroiliac:**

Job Classification	RTW
	Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 weeks - 2 weeks
Light Work	0 weeks - 3 weeks
Medium Work	0 weeks - 4 weeks
Heavy Work	2 weeks - 4 weeks
Very Heavy	Medical Advisor opinion based on medical reporting if lay off exceeds 4 weeks

## Disability Duration Guidelines Head/Trunk/Spine Miscellaneous

### **Coccyx Disorder: Coccydynia following direct trauma**

Job Classification	RTW Maximum/Minimum  Medical Advisory opinion based on medical reporting if layoff exceeds 2 weeks
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### **Herinated Disc: Conservative medical treatment**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 weeks - 4 weeks
Light Work	0 weeks - 4 weeks
Medium Work	4 weeks - 8 weeks
Heavy Work	by report
Very Heavy	by report

### **Nerve Root and Plexus Disorders: including arachnoiditis/ scarring**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum  Medical Advisor opinion recommended when nerve root and plexus disorders first diagnosed on medical reporting
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**Paralytic Syndrome: Post traumatic or post procedural**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum  Medical Advisor opinion recommended when paralytic syndrome first diagnosed on medical reporting
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**Spinal Cord Injury:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum  Medical Advisor opinion based on medical reporting
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**Spinal Osteoarthritis: Degenerative joint disease, spondylosis - post traumatic or post surgical**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum  Medical Advisor opinion recommended when Spinal Osteoarthritis first diagnosed on medical reporting
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## Disability Duration Guidelines Head/Trunk/Spine Procedures

### **Mandible: wired**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	1 week - 4 weeks
Light Work	1 week - 4 weeks
Medium Work	3 weeks - 6 weeks
Heavy Work	6 weeks - 8 weeks
Very Heavy	6 weeks - 8 weeks
	If job requires verbal communication, modified duties may be required.

### **Repair of Vertebral Fracture: surgical instrumental e.g. rods, screws**

Job Classification	RTW Maximum/Minimum
	Medical Advisory opinion based on medical reporting if layoff exceeds 16 weeks

### **Lysis of Adhesions of Spinal Cord and Nerve Roots:**

Job Classification	RTW Maximum/Minimum
	Medical Advisory opinion based on medical reporting if layoff exceeds 12 weeks

**Disectomy/Excision of Interverbal Disc:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Light Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Medium Work	6 weeks - 10 weeks
Heavy Work/Very Heavy Work	by report

**Microdisectomy:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Light Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Medium Work	6 weeks - 10 weeks
Heavy Work/Very Heavy Work	by report

**Spinal Fusion: requires Medical Advisor referral**

**(I.) Single Fusion**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	12 weeks - 16 weeks
Light Work	14 weeks - 16 weeks
Medium Work	16 weeks - 24 weeks
Heavy\Very Heavy Work	by report

**Spinal Fusion: requires Medical Advisor referral (continued)**

**(II.) Multiple Levels**

Job Classifications	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	16 weeks - 20 weeks
Light Work	22 weeks - 26 weeks
Medium Work	26 weeks - 32 weeks
Heavy\Very Heavy Work	by report

**Hernia Surgery: inguinal and femoral**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	2 weeks - 4 weeks
Light Work	6 weeks - 8 weeks
Medium Work	6 weeks
Heavy Work	6 weeks
Very Heavy	6 weeks

**Hernia Surgery: arthroscopic repair**

All job classifications: 3 weeks

**Neurostimulator Implants: insertion**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	0 weeks - 2 weeks
Light Work	0 weeks - 2 weeks
Medium Work	0 weeks - 2 weeks
Heavy Work/Very Heavy Work	by report

**Coccygectomy:**

Job Classification	RTW Minimum/Maximum
Sedentary Work	2 weeks - 4 weeks
Light Work	3 weeks - 5 weeks
Medium Work	3 weeks - 5 weeks
Heavy Work	4 weeks - 6 weeks
Very Heavy	4 weeks - 6 weeks

**Other Surgeries:****Removal hardware**

All job classifications: 1- 4 weeks