

The Employers' Reasonable Accommodation Handbook

Session Two: Physical Disabilities

Ohio | Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities



Physical Disabilities

Physical disabilities include conditions that can impact a variety of body systems and affect several physical functions.

- Physical disabilities can be temporary, chronic, and include exacerbations of symptoms.
- Some examples of conditions that can result in physical disabilities include arthritis, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injuries, amputations, spina bifida, and musculoskeletal injuries.
- The impact of these limitations varies and not every person with a physical disability will experience all of them. Each person's abilities, strengths, and skills are unique.



Myth



Fact

All physical disabilities are obvious.

Some physical disabilities, like chronic pain, rheumatoid arthritis, and fibromyalgia are invisible.

All people who use wheelchairs cannot walk.

Not all people who use a wheelchair use it all the time. A person may use a wheelchair when symptoms like pain or fatigue are worse.

People with chronic fatigue are just tired.

People with this condition experience physical and mental exhaustion that cannot be remedied with a good night's sleep.

People with a spinal cord injury cannot work.

Most people with a spinal cord injury return to work in some capacity within one year of their injury and many to the same job.

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Reasonable Accommodation Examples by Type

Accessible Work Environment

- Relocate workstation
- Provide height-adjustable desk
- Change location of interview to accessible space

Modifying Policies

- Permit the use of a service animal
- Allow an employee to telework
- Modify an attendance policy to permit a flexible schedule

Altering Supervisory Methods

- Provide advance notice of meetings so employee can schedule medical appointments around these

Equipment or Services

- Provide lift equipment and carts
- Install speech recognition software
- Arrange for a modified keyboard
- Provide a driver for travel-related tasks

Job Restructure

- Permit employee to choose when to perform job tasks based on pain levels
- Allow materials to be transported or carried in smaller amounts

Permit a Flexible Schedule

- Adjust shift start and end times to accommodate public transportation
- Permit longer breaks to allow time for an employee to manage symptoms