

A woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a light grey cardigan over a white top and blue jeans, is smiling and assisting a person in a wheelchair. The person in the wheelchair is wearing a light blue sweater and white pants. They are standing in front of a glass door with a wooden frame. The door has a large white letter 'D' on it. The background shows a brick wall and a stone ledge. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an indoor or well-lit outdoor environment.

# Work Ability of a Personal Assistant

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# Ensuring work ability

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**Work ability means a person's ability to perform their work.**

Good work ability results from a balance in job demands and resources.

According to law, the employer must ensure health and safety at work. The employer must also support employees' ability to cope at work.



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# Examples of job demands and resources



# A good orientation helps you get started

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When the employment relationship begins, it is important that the assistant receives sufficient work orientation. This means explaining clearly:

## What does the work involve?

- What are the main tasks?
- Will the assistant help you move around, dress, or with household chores?
- Does the job involve running errands outside the home, such as shopping or participating in a hobby?
- Is the work more physical in nature or does it involve being a calm presence and helping with daily tasks?

## How is the work performed?

- What are the main practices that you would like the assistant to follow?
- Do you have a specific way that you would like your clothes folded or food prepared?
- Do you use assistive devices that they should know how to use?
- How do you wish for breaks to be arranged?
- Do you have routines that you wish the assistant to follow?

## What is the work environment like?

- How will you ensure that the work is carried out safely?
- Is the work mainly performed at home or also outside the home?
- Are there pets or other family members in the home whom the assistant will interact with?
- Are there stairs, narrow doorways or other things in the home that affect the performance of the work?

# Managing workload

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The Finnish Occupational Safety and Health Act requires you to identify hazard, harm and workload factors and to manage them.



The work may involve physical workload factors such as awkward work postures, repetitive movements, physical activity or lifting heavy object.



The work may involve mental workload such as unclear expectations, haste or feeling that there is too much work or difficult interaction situations.



The workload should be balanced so that it matches the assistant's health and capacity for work.


# Support work resources

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Employer, can strengthen the resources that support work. Ask the assistant what motivates and inspires them in their work. When these moments are reinforced, the work feels better and endurance improves.

Pay special attention to ensuring that:

- You provide the assistant with thorough onboarding to the job.
- You give them regular feedback on how the work is going.
- You say out loud when the assistant succeeds in their work.



**'Job resources** refer to factors that motivate the employee and promote smooth work, and also make meeting the job demands easier.'

# Key job resource factors of personal assistants

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Meaningful  
work



Good  
employer  
collaboration



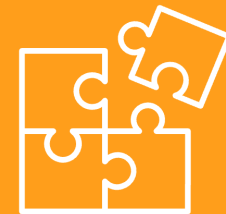
Influence  
at work



Control over  
work & hours



Sense of  
control

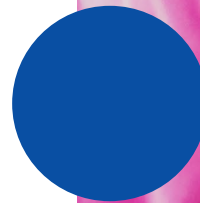


# Ensuring work ability

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Early care for the employee helps solve work ability challenges before they have a chance to grow.

The best form of work ability support is a smooth everyday life together with your assistant. Together, you can regularly stop and think about **how the work is going and what you could do differently.**



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# Tips for a discussion

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**Prepare for the discussion.** Allocate enough time and ensure a quiet space for the discussion, consider what information or parties are needed to resolve the matter.

**Discuss your concerns and challenges related to work directly and openly** , but with respect for the employee.

**Discuss the work and how it is going.** Make smoothly flowing work the goal and ask what would help the employee.

**Focus on finding solutions.** What solutions and support measures have already been implemented, what will be done in future, and how will the measures be monitored?

**Draw up a plan together.** Clearly write down the issues raised in the discussion, the actions taken, and the agreed actions (e.g., a visit to occupational health care, temporary work arrangements), as well as how you will monitor the situation.

# Seek help with challenges

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The employee may fall ill or situations can happen in their life that deplete their resources. That is why it is a good idea to agree on the procedure to follow in case of illness right at the start of the employment relationship.

Together, you can review:

- how to report a sick leave
- when a doctor's certificate is needed
- how wages will be paid when the assistant falls ill

As an employer, you are responsible for arranging occupational health care.

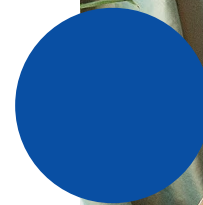


# Responsibility for own work ability

**Each of us is responsible for our own well-being and work ability.**

Work ability can be maintained in many ways, for example:

- by eating a varied diet
- by exercising regularly
- by ensuring sufficient rest and recovery
- by developing one's competence and working methods
- by openly discussing the work and how it is going with the employer
- by recognising what things increase motivation and support the ability to cope
- by seeking help for stressful situations or solving them, for example from occupational health care



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