

Part-time work can come in a variety of shapes and sizes and individual arrangements are often tailored by employee and employer so that both their needs can be met.

Here are some suggested part-time options that you might like to explore with your employer. We've also listed the benefits and limitations that can be associated with part-time work to provide you with a realistic view of the positives and negatives that you might face when negotiating and returning to work part-time.

### What are the types of part-time options?

**Part-time options (and there are many) can mean any one of the following type of arrangement:**

- ◆ The more common, traditional permanent part-time arrangement eg: a 2-3 day working week
- ◆ 5 day fortnight where an employee works in a cycle of 3 days one week, then 2 days the next
- ◆ Job share when one full time job is performed by two or more people
- ◆ Number of flexible hours per week on a more casual basis eg: 15 hours over any 5 working days
- ◆ Number of days in the workplace coupled with some work from home
- ◆ Roster or shift work with hours spread over a month cycle
- ◆ Freelance or project work with unspecified and negotiable hours

### Gradually returning to work

Staggering your return to work by doing part-time work is a great way of easing yourself back into the swing of working life again. If you are returning to your 'old' job following a maternity leave break, you could explore and negotiate with your employer to let you return on a part-time basis for a trial period to see if the arrangement suits you both eg: 3-6 months whilst you gradually increase your hours. This is a reasonable offer that many employers should be able to accommodate to and by negotiating a 'trial' means that neither you nor your employer feels 'locked in' to a rigid agreement. This will also help you to manage family demands impacted by your return to work.

Other examples are that you could return to work for three days a week for two months, then raise this to four days for three months and eventually come back to five days a week.



What other part time arrangement can you think of that would suit you?

### Benefits of part-time work

Part-time work allows you the opportunity to:

- ◆ achieve a healthy work balance without overly compromising family life
- ◆ keep your professional skills up-to-date
- ◆ restore confidence that you can work and raise a family
- ◆ have more work flexibility to enjoy family life and meet family commitments
- ◆ reduce your exposure to negative work factors such as poor morale and gossiping

### Limitations of part-time work

Part-time work can come with limitations. Examples include:

- ◆ sometimes perceived as inconvenient or unworkable by many employers whose businesses rely on full time resources
- ◆ part-timers can be disadvantaged and passed over for advancement
- ◆ it can be assumed that a part-time employee either isn't as valuable or committed as a full time employee
- ◆ out of sight, out of mind ...sometimes part-timers are forgotten about when organising company and team events
- ◆ reduced income
- ◆ part-timers can suffer resentment from other full time colleagues and may experience negative stereotyping
- ◆ potentially more stressful due to having more like a full-time workload in part-time hours

### Where to look for part-time work

Part time jobs can be found via;

- ◆ Online job search providers such as [www.careermums.com.au](http://www.careermums.com.au), [www.seek.com.au](http://www.seek.com.au), [www.careerone.com.au](http://www.careerone.com.au)
- ◆ Your local newspaper is a great source for part time jobs
- ◆ Billboards, Magazines
- ◆ Libraries, community centres, TAFE, Centrelink
- ◆ Direct on employer websites
- ◆ Recruitment agencies that offer part time and temporary positions such as [www.nine2three.com.au](http://www.nine2three.com.au), [www.flexprofessionals.com.au](http://www.flexprofessionals.com.au), [www.seedrecruitment.com.au](http://www.seedrecruitment.com.au), [www.daretwoshare.com.au](http://www.daretwoshare.com.au), [www.priorities.com.au](http://www.priorities.com.au)
- ◆ Professional associations
- ◆ Word of mouth – by networking

### Making part-time work for you

To make part-time work beneficial for your circumstances you should:

- ◆ Carefully consider all your part-time options; what will be most suited to your circumstances that are realistic and workable
- ◆ Negotiate arrangements that suit you, your family and employer – remember its give and take!
- ◆ Be flexible where possible, occasionally you'll need to vary your hours or your employer may require you to.
- ◆ Be organised; you'll need to hone your time management skills. Have a schedule for work and home, try to integrate these when it makes sense to, and alternatively separate work and family commitments as required.
- ◆ Try not to let work creep into taking up your time on a non-work day.
- ◆ Plan ahead; work with your family to develop a routine on the days you work eg allocate household chores, who'll pick the child(ren) up from care, who'll make dinner. Plan things you can look forward to on your days off.
- ◆ Regularly 'check in' eg: every 3 months with your employer to assess that the arrangement is working for you both. Use this 'check in' opportunity to discuss any problems or alternative solutions.
- ◆ Have contingency plans for when things don't go to plan so that you can manage the ups and downs of family and working life more smoothly. Eg: what care arrangements will you need during school holiday and sick periods? Talk about these typical scenarios with your employer upfront and agree how that might be handled in advance.

### Agreeing part-time arrangements with employers

Before discussing and negotiating part-time arrangements with your employer, be prepared by considering the following types of questions...

- ◆ What are your part-time requirements?
- ◆ What type of part-time arrangement(s) could you consider adopting?
- ◆ How will your job, team and manager be impacted by reduced hours (both positively and negatively)?
- ◆ What difficulties might arise due to you working fewer hours?
- ◆ What concerns do you think your manager may have?
- ◆ How could these concerns be overcome / addressed?
- ◆ How could your job responsibilities and workload be restructured to accommodate part-time?
- ◆ What alternative arrangements could be made to lessen the impact of your reduced hours?
- ◆ Are there others in your team that could help make part-time workable for you?
- ◆ How adaptable and flexible will you and your employer need to be?
- ◆ How will you ensure you are 'kept in the loop'?
- ◆ How will your pay be affected?
- ◆ What should be agreed upfront between you and your manager?

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