

Return to School

Getting back to school is often a main goal of our students recovering from brain and/or spinal cord injury. Many of our patients work on returning to school while they are with us, and some may even take several classes while still in therapy. Our patients include students in middle school, high school, college, trade or technical school and those working toward completing their GED.

Changes in physical ability, cognition/thinking, communication, behavior and emotional functioning can affect a person's readiness to return to school. Examples of skills that may be affected include:

Physical:

- Use of arms or legs
- Balance
- Vision
- Bowel & Bladder
- Speech
- Coordination
- Hearing
- Swallowing

Behavioral:

- Agitation
- Lack of self-control
- Irritability
- Problems with motivation

Cognitive:

- Language
- Attention
- Problem-solving
- Time Management
- Memory
- Awareness of Problems
- Initiation
- Planning

Emotional:

- Anxiety
- Denial
- Depression

Your therapists will help you determine if these skills have changed and will work with you to improve problem areas. Therapy, including group therapy sessions, will give you a chance to test out your learning skills before returning to a classroom setting and to try out different strategies that will help you be successful when you return. Specialized testing may also help to identify what your learning needs are and can provide the school with the written report needed to help administrators

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and teachers understand your learning needs, or academic accommodations (see below). You may also be offered support in communicating with school personnel about your learning needs.

Academic accommodations are changes to teaching, testing and/or the environment that support the needs of a student with a disability, in order to provide an equal chance to benefit from education. Necessary academic accommodations may be different for each student. Examples of academic accommodations include:

- Allowing additional time for testing and assignments
- Allowing use of peer note takers
- Use of audio recording devices or other technology
- Asking the teacher to repeat key information often to enhance information processing.
- Testing using closed-set questions (e.g., multiple choice, matching or true/false questions)
- Increasing the time given to travel between classes.
- Placing the student nearest to the instructor during lectures or when directions are given.

Please also refer to these resources as they relate to Return to School:

- **Return to School: Process**
- **Return to School: Know the Law**
- **Return to School: Advocacy Tips**
- **Return to School: High School / College**