

Part 4

Recognise workload

Every job has factors that can cause workload. Sometimes an assistant may feel that their work is strenuous or tiring. You might notice this, for example, if the work pace slows down or accuracy falls.

This is why it is important to take a moment and think, together with the assistant, about what things cause workload.

- Is there too much work?
- Is there something particularly challenging about the tasks?
- Or could it be that the assistant's private life is creating additional stress?

As an employer, you are obligated to assess the assistant's workload. The Finnish Occupational Safety and Health Act requires you to identify hazard, harm and workload factors and to manage them.

The workload of personal assistants can arise from many different sources.

Physical workload factors

The work may involve physical workload factors such as

- awkward work postures
- repetitive movements or physical activity
- lifting heavy objects

If the physical workload is too high or continues for long, it can begin to manifest as pain or cause other disorders in the muscles and joints. The workload should be suited to the assistant's health and work ability.

As the employer, you can talk to your assistant about how the work feels physically. Together, you can figure out how to make the work easier if something feels too strenuous. Often even small changes can make the work a lot lighter and more pleasant.

Mental workload factors

Sometimes, work situations can come up that cause us stress. Examples of these mental workload factors are:

- constant changes in the work and how it is done
- unclear or unreasonable expectations
- haste or feeling that there is too much, or sometimes too little, work
- frequent interruptions or the work bleeds into leisure time
- discrimination and other inappropriate treatment

- bad communication or difficult interaction situations
- working alone
- acting against your own or the employer's values

As the employer, you can talk to your assistant about how they experience the work. Together, you can figure out how to make the work easier if something feels too strenuous. Often even small changes can make the work a lot lighter and more pleasant.