



Job Accommodation Network

Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

Accommodation and Compliance Series

Accommodation and Compliance Series: Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS)

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Preface

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JAN'S Accommodation and Compliance Series

Introduction

JAN's Accommodation and Compliance Series is designed to help employers determine effective accommodations and comply with Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Each publication in the series addresses a specific medical condition and provides information about the condition, ADA information, accommodation ideas, and resources for additional information.

The Accommodation and Compliance Series is a starting point in the accommodation process and may not address every situation. Accommodations should be made on a case by case basis, considering each employee's individual limitations and accommodation needs. Employers are encouraged to contact JAN to discuss specific situations in more detail.

For information on assistive technology and other accommodation ideas, visit JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource (SOAR) at <https://AskJAN.org/soar>.

Information about Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS)

Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS) is a form of dysfunction of the autonomic nervous system's ability to regulate heart rate. With POTS, the body is not able to keep heart rate at steady and stable levels. A variety of symptoms are associated with POTS, which may include but are not limited to angina (chest pain sometimes radiating down the left arm or into the jaw); dizziness or lightheadedness that often manifests during periods of prolonged periods of walking, prolonged periods of standing in one static position, or when standing up suddenly from seated positions; syncope (fainting); chronic fatigue; tremors, exercise intolerance; hypo or hypertension, and gastric upset.

Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS) and the Americans with Disabilities Act

The ADA does not contain a definitive list of medical conditions that constitute disabilities. Instead, the ADA defines a person with a disability as someone who (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more "major life activities," (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. For more information about how to determine whether a person has a disability under the ADA, see [How to Determine Whether a Person Has a Disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act \(ADAAA\)](#).

Accommodating Employees with Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS)

People with POTS may develop some of the limitations discussed below, but rarely develop all of them. Also, the degree of limitation will vary among individuals. Be aware that not all people with POTS will need accommodations to perform their jobs and many others may only need a few accommodations. The following is only a sample of the possibilities available should any situation or need arise. Numerous other accommodation solutions may exist.

Questions to Consider:

1. What limitations is the employee experiencing?
2. How do these limitations affect the employee and the employee's job performance?
3. What specific job tasks are problematic as a result of these limitations?
4. What accommodations are available to reduce or eliminate these problems? Are all possible resources being used to determine possible accommodations?
5. Once accommodations are in place, would it be useful to meet with the employee to evaluate the effectiveness of the accommodations and to determine whether additional accommodations are needed?
6. Do supervisory personnel and employees need training?

Accommodation Ideas:

Limitations

Attentiveness/Concentration

- Alerting Devices
- Alternative Lighting
- Applications (apps)
- Apps for Memory
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- Calendars and Planners
- Cubicle Doors, Shields, and Shades
- Electronic Organizers

- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Flexible Schedule
- Full Spectrum or Natural Lighting Products
- Job Coaches
- Job Restructuring
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- Noise Canceling Headsets
- Personal On-Site Paging Devices
- Professional Organizers
- Sound Absorption and Sound Proof Panels
- Task Separation
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Timers and Watches
- Uninterrupted "Off" Work Time
- Verbal Cues
- Visual Schedulers
- Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace
- Written Instructions

Decreased Stamina/Fatigue

- Accessories for Scooters
- Aide/Assistant/Attendant
- All-Terrain Scooters
- Anti-fatigue Matting
- Elevating Wheelchairs
- Ergonomic and Pneumatic Tools
- Ergonomic Assessments
- Ergonomic Equipment
- Examination and Procedures Chair
- Flexible Schedule

- Head Support for Wheelchairs
- Job Restructuring
- Low Task Chair
- Mechanic's Seats and Creepers
- Multi-Purpose Carts
- Periodic Rest Breaks
- Scooters
- Stand-lean Stools
- Stools for Cutting Hair
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Walkers
- Wearable Anti-fatigue Matting
- Wheelchair Accessible Scales
- Wheelchair Mounts
- Wheelchairs
- Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace

Dizziness

- Alerting Devices
- Alternative Lighting
- Fall Protection
- Flexible Schedule
- Modified Break Schedule
- Padded Edging
- Personal Safety and Fall Alert Devices
- Protective Eyewear
- Rollators and Rolling Walkers
- Scooters
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Vehicle Rear Vision System

Headache

- Air Cleaners & Purifiers
- Alternative Lighting
- Anti-Glare Filters for Fluorescent Lights
- Cubicle Doors, Shields, and Shades
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Flexible Schedule
- Full Spectrum or Natural Lighting Products
- Job Restructuring
- Lighting Gel Filters
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- Non-Fluorescent Lighting
- Task Lighting
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely

Memory Loss

- Additional Training Time / Training Refreshers
- Apps for Memory
- Calendars and Planners
- Electronic Organizers
- Job Coaches
- Professional Organizers
- Recorded Directives, Messages, Materials
- Reminders
- Social Skill Builders
- Support Person
- Verbal Cues
- Visual Schedulers
- Written Instructions

Nausea

- Flexible Schedule

- Mini Refrigerators/ Electric Coolers
- Odor Control
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely

Pain

- Accessories for Scooters
- Adjustable Workstations for Industrial Settings
- Adjustable Workstations for Office Settings
- Aide/Assistant/Attendant
- All-Terrain Scooters
- Alternative Input Devices
- Alternative Keyboards
- Alternative Mice
- Anti-fatigue Matting
- Anti-vibration Gloves
- Anti-vibration Seats
- Anti-vibration Tool Wraps
- Automated Filing Systems
- Automatic Door Openers
- Cake Decorating and Baking Equipment
- Carts
- Chairs with Head Support
- Compact Material Handling
- Electronic Organizers
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Ergonomic and Adjustable Office Chairs
- Ergonomic and Pneumatic Tools
- Ergonomic Assessments
- Ergonomic Equipment
- Examination and Procedures Chair
- Fans

- Flexible Schedule
- Forearm Support
- Gooseneck and Other Telephone Holders
- Hair Scissors
- Head Support for Wheelchairs
- Headsets
- Light Switch Extension Handles
- Low Task Chair
- Mechanic's Seats and Creepers
- Modified Break Schedule
- Pickups, Semis, and Heavy Equipment
- Pipettes
- Professional Organizers
- Scooters
- Scribe/Notetaker
- Service Animal
- Speech Recognition Software
- Spring-Loaded Carts
- Stand-lean Stools
- Stools for Cutting Hair
- Strobe Lights
- Supine Workstations
- Talking Bar Code Scanner/Reader
- Talking Money Identifier
- Telescoping Cameras
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Van Conversion
- Wearable Anti-fatigue Matting
- Wheelchair Accessible Scales
- Wheelchair Carts/Trailers
- Wheelchair Mounts

- Wheelchairs
- Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace
- Workstation Space Heaters
- Writing Aids

Spasm/Tic/Tremor/Blinking

- Aide/Assistant/Attendant
- Alternative Input Devices
- Alternative Keyboards
- Alternative Mice
- Alternative Mice - Limiting Tremors
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Device
- Auto-dialers
- Book Holders
- Breath and Mouth Controlled Alternative Computer Input Devices
- Compact Material Handling
- Door Knob Grips and Handles
- Eating Aids
- Ergonomic and Pneumatic Tools
- Ergonomic Equipment
- Expanded Keyboards
- Extra Grip Gloves
- Forearm Support
- Grip Aids
- Hands Free Resuscitation Devices
- Hands-free Telephones
- Job Restructuring
- Keyguards
- Money Handling Products
- On-Screen Keyboards
- One-Handed Keyboards
- Outgoing Voice Amplification - Telephone

- Padded Edging
- Page Turners
- Periodic Rest Breaks
- Personal On-Site Paging Devices
- Protective Eyewear
- Scribe/Notetaker
- Speech Recognition Software
- Switches
- Tongue Touch Keyboards/Mice
- Tool Balancers
- Typing / Keyboarding Aids
- Vacuum Lifts
- Vacuum Pickup Tools
- Voice Amplification
- Voice Recognition Memory Devices
- Word Prediction/Completion and Macro Software
- Writing Aids

Standing

- Accessories for Scooters
- Adjustable Drafting Tables
- Adjustable Workstations for Industrial Settings
- Adjustable Workstations for Office Settings
- All-Terrain Scooters
- Anti-fatigue Matting
- Assist Lift Cushions
- Elevating Lift and Office Chairs
- Ergonomic and Pneumatic Tools
- Examination and Procedures Chair
- Flexible Schedule
- Grab Bars
- Handheld Computers (General)

- Head Support for Wheelchairs
- Low Task Chair
- Periodic Rest Breaks
- Proper Sitting / Standing Techniques
- Scooters
- Stair Assists
- Stand Aids
- Stand-lean Stools
- Stand-up Wheelchairs
- Stools for Cutting Hair
- Van Conversion
- Wearable Anti-fatigue Matting
- Wheelchair Accessible Scales
- Wheelchair Carts/Trailers
- Wheelchair Mounts
- Wheelchairs

Temperature Sensitivity

- Air Deflectors
- Cold Resistant Gloves
- Cooling Clothing
- Fans
- Flexible Schedule
- Heated Clothing
- Heated Ergonomic and Computer Products
- Heated Gloves
- Portable Air Conditioners
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Vent Covers
- Workstation Space Heaters

Walking

- Accessories for Scooters
- Aide/Assistant/Attendant
- All-Terrain Scooters
- All-Terrain Wheelchairs
- Anti-fatigue Matting
- Boat Access
- Ergonomic and Pneumatic Tools
- Examination and Procedures Chair
- Foldable / Transport Wheelchairs
- Head Support for Wheelchairs
- Large-Rated Scooters
- Large-Rated Wheelchairs
- Low Task Chair
- Personal Transportation and Mobility Products
- Reclining Wheelchairs
- Rollators and Rolling Walkers
- Scooters
- Scooters for Small Stature
- Stair Assists
- Stools for Cutting Hair
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Van Conversion
- Walkers
- Walkers for Tall Individuals
- Walkers with Seats
- Wearable Anti-fatigue Matting
- Wheelchair Accessible Scales
- Wheelchair Carts/Trailers
- Wheelchair Mounts
- Wheelchairs
- Wheelchairs for Small Stature

- Worksite Redesign / Modified Workspace

Work-Related Functions

Manipulate Items

- Adjustable Drafting Tables
- Adjustable Massage Tables
- Aerial Lifts
- Anti-vibration Gloves
- Anti-vibration Tool Wraps
- Auto-dialers
- Automated Filing Systems
- Automatic Door Openers
- Cake Decorating and Baking Equipment
- Compact Mobile Cranes
- Deburring Tools
- Electric Scissors
- Electric Stapler
- Electronic Organizers
- Ergonomic and Pneumatic Tools
- Folding Steps
- Graphics Design Software
- Grip Aids
- Hair Scissors
- Height Adjustable Table Legs
- Large-Rated Small Step Ladders
- Light Switch Extension Handles
- Mechanic's Seats and Creepers
- Pickups, Semis, and Heavy Equipment
- Pipettes
- Professional Organizers
- Proper Sitting / Standing Techniques

- Rolling Safety Ladders
- Sewing Aids for Individuals with Vision Impairment
- Stair Assists
- Stools for Cutting Hair
- Talking Bar Code Scanner/Reader
- Talking Money Identifier
- Test Tube Holders
- Tool Balancers
- Vacuum Lifts
- Vacuum Pickup Tools
- Wheelchair Trays

Move Items/People

- Adjustable Exam Tables
- Aerial Lifts
- Animal Lift Tables
- Ball Transfer Tables
- Battery Powered Lift Tables
- Cake Decorating and Baking Equipment
- Carts
- Compact Material Handling
- Compact Mobile Cranes
- Engine Lifts and Lift Plates
- Ergonomic and Pneumatic Tools
- Grab Bars - Toilet Hinged Arm Support
- Hair Scissors
- Large-Rated Small Step Ladders
- Lifting Aids
- Light Switch Extension Handles
- Manhole Cover Lifts
- Multi-Purpose Carts
- Pickups, Semis, and Heavy Equipment

- Pipettes
- Pool Lifts
- Proper Lifting Techniques
- Rolling Safety Ladders
- Spring-Loaded Carts
- Stainless Steel Carts and Worktables
- Swing Away Grab Bars
- Tire Handling
- Transfer Aids
- Transfer Sheets
- Trashcans
- Vacuum Lifts
- Vacuum Pickup Tools
- Walk-up Changing Tables

Parking

- Accessible Parking Space
- Flexible Schedule
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Wheelchairs

Stress

- Apps for Anxiety and Stress
- Behavior Modification Techniques
- Counseling/Therapy
- Environmental Sound Machines / Tinnitus Maskers / White Noise Machines
- Flexible Schedule
- Job Coaches
- Job Restructuring
- Marginal Functions
- Modified Break Schedule
- Monitor Mirrors

- Odor Control
- On-site Mentoring
- Service Animal
- Simulated Skylights and Windows
- Strobe Lights
- Supervisory Methods
- Support Animal
- Support Person
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Uninterrupted Work Time

Temperature

- Air Deflectors
- Cold Resistant Gloves
- Cooling Clothing
- Fans
- Flexible Schedule
- Foot Warmers
- Heat Resistant Gloves
- Heated Clothing
- Heated Ergonomic and Computer Products
- Heated Gloves
- Modified Break Schedule
- Telework, Work from Home, Working Remotely
- Vent Covers
- Workstation Space Heaters

Situations and Solutions:

The following situations and solutions are real-life examples of accommodations that were made by JAN customers. Because accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis, these examples may not be effective for every workplace but give you an idea about the types of accommodations that are possible.

A healthcare case manager with POTS experienced a drop in blood pressure if she stood or walked for long durations.

When this occurred, she needed to sit down, otherwise she would black out and fall. The healthcare facility already had grab bars, which helped stabilize her, but the employer also moved her to a location in the facility to limit walking and provide her with close access to work-related equipment.

A new hire with POTS was beginning training for a hotel receptionist position.

The training program required long hours for multiple days in a row. The employee was able to perform the job tasks, but sitting for long periods in training caused her to feel dizzy. After the employee requested an accommodation, the employer staggered the training schedule to enable her to sit in the training in the mornings and job shadow in the afternoons. This enabled her to minimize symptoms and complete the training.

A state outreach coordinator with POTS experienced low blood pressure while sitting in traffic during her commute to the worksite for team meetings.

She was able to perform her job tasks from home, but meetings were held on site. After the employee fainted while driving, she requested remote meetings as a form of reasonable accommodation. The employer approved the request for monthly meetings and scheduled quarterly meetings ahead of time so the employee could arrange transportation.

A middle school teacher with POTS was experiencing extreme fatigue and was unable to stand all day long.

After engaging in an interactive process with her school principal, they agreed that a stand-lean stool would help her at the chalkboard. They also modified her schedule and placed her planning period in the middle of the day to help break up the more physically demanding job duties.

A federal employee with POTS asked for a reclining chair to raise their legs, which would help stabilize their heart rate.

The employer instead furnished an ergonomic chair that did not recline and a footrest. The employee was dissatisfied and called JAN to discuss next steps. The employee used a JAN sample template to help explain why the ergonomic chair and footrest were ineffective as a reasonable accommodation and why the reclining chair would be effective. After engaging in the interactive process and identifying the need for specific equipment, the employer provided the reclining chair.

Products

There are numerous products that can be used to accommodate people with limitations. JAN's Searchable Online Accommodation Resource at <https://AskJAN.org/soar> is designed to let users explore various accommodation options. Many product vendor lists are accessible through this system; however, JAN provides these lists and many more that are not available on the Web site upon request. Contact JAN directly if you have specific accommodation situations, are looking for products, need vendor information, or are seeking a referral.

Resources

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The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a free consulting service that provides information about job accommodations, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the employability of people with disabilities.

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