

SPORT CONCUSSION

Return to Play

A concussion is a serious event, but you can recover fully from such an injury if the brain is given enough time to rest and recuperate. Just as one would normally take time off and gradually go back to sport following an ankle injury to allow the ankle to heal properly, the same idea should be applied to a concussion. In following a stepwise progression athletes can return to play (RTP) as outlined below. The athlete should continue to proceed to the next level if experiencing no symptoms at the current level. As well, there is to be progression in each given step – starting with 10min walking and increasing to 30min, from walking to running, etc. Generally each step should take no less than 24 hours so that an athlete would take approximately 1 week to go through the complete protocol. If any post concussion symptoms occur while in the stepwise program, the athlete should drop back to the previous level and try to progress again after a 24 hour period of rest. Remember, symptoms may return later that day or even the next morning, not necessarily during the activity. As well, it is advised that a student athlete needs to return to school successfully before trying to engage in returning to their sport. (McCrory P, Meeuwisse WH, Aubry M, et al. Consensus statement on concussion in sport: the 4th International Conference on Concussion in Sport Held in Zurich, November 2012. *Br J Sports Med* 2013 (47):250-258.)

Return to Play Protocol

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| Step 1 | No Activity: Symptoms at rest |
| Step 2 | Light Aerobic Exercise: E.G. walking, swimming, or stationary cycling with a maximum intensity of <70% allowed. No resistance training or weight lifting. Duration/ intensity can be gradually increased if no signs or symptoms are present. |
| Step 3 | Sport Specific Exercise: E.G. skating drills in hockey, running drills in soccer, throwing in football/ rugby. No jarring motions, e.g. high speed stops, hitting a baseball with a bat. No head impact activities. |
| Step 4 | Noncontact Training Drills: May progress to more complex training drills, non contact practice e.g., passing drills, shooting. Can start progressive resistance training. Obtain medical clearance before progressing to Steps 5 and 6 |
| Step 5 | Full Contact Practice: Participate in normal training activities |
| Step 6 | Return to Play: Normal game play |

Please remember these steps do not correspond to days! It may take many days to progress through one step, especially if the concussion is severe. As soon as symptom appear, the player should return to the previous step and wait at least one more day until attempting any activity. Never return to play if symptoms persist! A player who returns to activity before full recovery from the original concussion is at high risk of sustaining another concussion, with symptoms that may be increased and prolonged.

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