

Concussion Management

RETURN-TO-PLAY GUIDELINES



STEP 1: No Activity, Complete Rest

- Limit school, work and tasks requiring concentration
- Refrain from physical activity until symptoms are gone
- Once symptoms are gone, a physician, preferably one with experience managing concussions, should be consulted before beginning a step-wise return to play process

STEP 2: Light Aerobic Exercise such as walking or stationary cycling

- The player should be supervised by someone who can help monitor for symptoms and signs
- No resistance training or weight lifting
- The duration and intensity of the aerobic exercise can be gradually increased over time if no symptoms or signs return during the exercise or the next day

Reoccurrence of Symptoms

- Return to rest until symptoms have resolved. If symptoms persist, consult a physician

No symptoms

- Proceed to Step 3 at a minimum of 24 hours

STEP 3: Sport Specific Activities

- Activities such as skating or throwing can begin at step 3
- No body contact or other jarring motions such as high speed stops or hitting a baseball with a bat

Reoccurrence of Symptoms

- Return to rest until symptoms have resolved and then return to the previous level
- If symptoms persist, consult a physician

No symptoms

- Proceed to Step 4 at a minimum of 24 hours

STEP 4: Begin Drills without body contact

Reoccurrence of Symptoms

- Return to rest until symptoms have resolved and then return to the previous level
- If symptoms persist, consult a physician

No symptoms

- The time needed to progress from non-contact exercise will vary with the severity of the concussion and with the player
- Proceed to Step 5 only after medical clearance

STEP 5: 'On Field' Practice with Body Contact, once cleared by a doctor

Reoccurrence of Symptoms

- Return to rest until symptoms have resolved and then return to the previous level
- If symptoms persist, consult a physician

No symptoms

- Proceed to Step 6 at a minimum of 24 hours

STEP 6: Return to play

Return-to-Play is a gradual process and must not begin before:

- **all symptoms** have disappeared
- a doctor has given the player clearance to return to activity

**NEVER
RETURN TO PLAY
WHILE YOU HAVE
SYMPTOMS**

Each step must take a minimum of 24 hours but could take longer, depending on the player and his/her specific situation.

- If the athlete **remains symptom free for 24 hours** after completing the current level s/he may move to the next level
- **If symptoms return within the 24 hour period, the athlete must wait until they are symptom free** and then return to the previous level
- Consult your physician if symptoms persist

The earliest a concussed athlete should return to play is one week.

A player who returns to active play before full recovery from the first concussion is at high risk of sustaining another concussion, with symptoms that may be increased and prolonged.