

Sports Concussion Graduated Return-to-Activity Guidelines

The Return-to-Activity Guideline is designed to return the individual to his/her activities as quickly and safely as possible following a concussion. Each phase should last a **minimum of 24 hours** and be completed in a consecutive order, but in some cases a phase may take days or weeks to complete. This guideline is not a substitute for a health care professional's clinical judgement and the patient's concussion modifying factors should be taken into consideration.

Complete Rest

The patient should avoid strenuous physical and cognitive exertion for the first 24-48 hours immediately following the injury. Patient can complete symptom-limited activities of daily living. Cease activity if patient experiences a 2-point or greater increase on a 0-10 symptom scale.

Light Exercise

24-48 hours after the injury, symptomatic and asymptomatic patients should resume low-risk activities such as walking or stationary biking for a duration of 20-40 minutes (30-40% of perceived maximum exertion). When patient can complete low-risk, light activity without an increase in symptoms, patient may progress to moderate aerobic exercise. Cease activity if patient experiences a 2-point or greater increase on a 0-10 symptom scale.

Moderate Exercise

Begin 30-60 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise such as jogging/running, cariooca, swimming, skating, burpees, jumping jacks, etc. (40-60% of perceived maximum exertion). Cease activity if patient experiences a 2-point or greater increase on a 0-10 symptom scale. When able to tolerate moderate aerobic activity without an increase in symptoms, progress to Sport-Specific Exercise.

Sport-Specific Exercise

Begin to incorporate sport-specific activities in a controlled environment, in addition to moderate aerobic exercises for 40-60 minutes (60-80% of perceived maximum exertion). Examples of sport-specific activities include shooting baskets and ball handling drills, shooting and puck/stick handling drills, running routes and throwing passes. Patient may wear helmet/shoulder pads if applicable but avoid full gear. Begin sub-maximal weight training in a controlled environment. Patient should be **asymptomatic for a minimum of 24 hours** and be approved by a healthcare provider following concussion testing/evaluation prior to progressing to non-contact practice participation.

Non-Contact Practice

Begin non-contact drills during team practices (80-100% of perceived maximum exertion). Patient may wear full gear. Patient may resume full weight lifting activities. Patient should cease activities and return to sport-specific exercise if symptoms return. It is also recommended that patient perform and pass exertional testing during this stage.

Unrestricted Training

Patient can resume full-contact training practices and activities. Patient should cease activities and return to sport-specific exercise if symptoms return.

RETURN TO FULL ACTIVITY