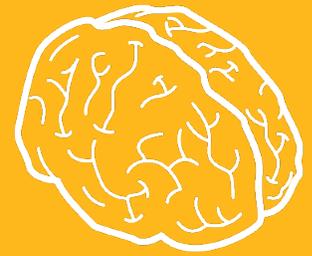


After a Concussion Guidelines for

# RETURN TO SPORT



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. Returning to normal activities, including sport participation, is a step-wise process that requires patience, attention, and caution.

Each step must take a minimum of one day but could last longer, depending on the player and his or her specific situation.

If symptoms reappear at any stage, go back to the previous stage until symptom-free for at least 24 hours.

## **STEP 1: Symptom limited activity**

After an initial short period of rest of 24-48 hours, light cognitive and physical activity can be initiated as long as they don't worsen symptoms. A physician, preferably one with experience managing concussions, should be consulted before beginning a step-wise return to learn and sport strategy.

## **STEP 2: Light aerobic exercise.**

Activities 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.

**Symptoms?** Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated. If symptoms persist consult a physician.

**No symptoms?** Proceed to Step 3 the next day.

## **STEP 3: Sport specific activities.**

Activities such as skating or throwing can begin at step 3. There should be no body contact or other jarring motions such as high speed stops or hitting a baseball with a bat.

**Symptoms?** Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated. If symptoms persist consult a physician.

**No symptoms?** Proceed to Step 4 the next day.

## **STEP 4: Begin Drills without body contact.**

**Symptoms?** Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated. 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.**

**Symptoms?** Return to previous stage and only engage in activities as tolerated. If symptoms persist consult a physician.

**No symptoms?** Proceed to Step 6 the next day.

## **STEP 6: Game play.**

# RETURN TO SPORT GUIDELINES

## NEVER RETURN TO PLAY IF YOU STILL HAVE SYMPTOMS!

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.

## HOW LONG DOES THIS PROCESS TAKE?

There should be at least 24 hours (or longer) for each step of the progression. If any symptoms worsen during exercise, STOP activity and go back to the previous step. Resistance training should be added only in the later stages (Step 4 or 5 at the earliest). If symptoms are persistent (e.g, more than 10–14 days in adults or more than 1 month in children), the concussed individual should be referred to a healthcare professional who is an expert in the management of concussion.

## HOW DO I FIND THE RIGHT DOCTOR?

When dealing with concussions, it is important to see a doctor who is knowledgeable in concussion management. This might include your physician or someone such as a sports medicine specialist. Your family doctor maybe required to submit a referral to see a specialist. Contact the Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine (CASEM) to find a sports medical physician in your area. Visit [C.S.A.M.](#) for more information. You can also refer your doctor to [Sport Manitoba's concussion page](#) for more information.

## WHAT IF MY SYMPTOMS RETURN DURING THIS PROCESS?

Sometimes these steps can cause symptoms of a concussion to return. This means that the brain has not yet healed. If any signs or symptoms return during the Return to Sport process, the concussed individual must regress to the previous stage of the process, and only indulge in those activities that do not worsen symptoms. The player must be re-evaluated by a physician before trying any activity again. Remember, symptoms may return later that day or the next, not necessarily during the activity!

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Sport Manitoba](#)  
[Parachute Canada](#)