



## Return To Play (or Activity) Guidelines

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. Sometimes these steps can cause symptoms of a concussion to return. This means that the brain has not yet healed, and needs more rest. If any signs or symptoms return during the Return To Play process, 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!

**Step 1:** No activity, only complete rest. This means no work, no school, and no physical activity. When symptoms are gone, a physician must be consulted. The physician will be able to clear the player to slowly return to some activities.

**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. **Symptoms? Go back to Step 1. No symptoms? Proceed to Step 3 the next day.**

**Step 3:** Sport specific 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? Go back to Step 2. No symptoms? Proceed to Step 4 the next day.**

**Step 4:** Drills without body contact.

**Symptoms? Go back to Step 3. No symptoms? Read below:**

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:** Begin drills with body contact.

**Step 6:** 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 symptoms appear, the player should return to the previous step and wait at least one more day before attempting any activity. The only way to heal a brain is to rest it. **Never return to play if symptoms persist!** 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.