

STAGES OF GRADED RETURN TO PLAY



STAGE 1: RELATIVE REST

1

ACTIVITY	DURATION	CRITERIA TO PROGRESS
Relative rest Gentle day-to-day activities - as guided by symptoms. Avoid screen time (TV, computer/homework/work, phone/social media and gaming)	1-2 days	Nothing specific - should progress after 1-2 days (prolonged rest has not shown to be helpful in recovery)

STAGE 2: RECOVERY

2

ACTIVITY	DURATION	CRITERIA TO PROGRESS
i. Daily activities Increase day-to-day activities - as guided by symptoms. May include short walks. Allow screen time (TV, computer/homework/work, phone/social media and gaming) - but may need to limit duration depending on symptoms. No team training drills. No resistance training.	Minimum 1 day	Concussion-related symptoms resolved or not worsened from their previous level (either during activity or by the next day)
ii. Light aerobic exercise Allow light activity e.g., walking, jogging or cycling at a slow to medium pace. Aim for about 50-60% maximum heart rate (can carry a conversation when exercising). No team training drills. No resistance training.	Minimum 1 day	Concussion-related symptoms resolved or not worsened from their previous level (either during activity or by the next day)
iii. Moderate aerobic exercise Allow moderate aerobic exercise e.g., walking, jogging or cycling at a medium pace. Aim for about 60-80% maximum heart rate. Can add individual or one on one sports-specific drills (e.g. goal kick, stationary handball) - but NO team drills. No resistance training.	Minimum 1 day	Concussion-related symptoms resolved or not worsened from their previous level (either during activity or by the next day)
iv. High intensity aerobic exercise Allow high-intensity aerobic exercise (e.g. running or cycling at high intensity). Up to maximum heart rate. Can add or continue with individual or one on one sports-specific drills (e.g. goal kick, stationary handball) - but NO team drills. Can commence gentle resistance training (50-75% of usual loads).	Minimum 1 day	a) Complete recovery of all concussion-related symptoms and signs at rest and with high intensity training; b) Have returned to school or work (without any need for modifications) c) not on any medications to help manage concussion-related symptoms (e.g. pain killers or anti-inflammatory medication)

STAGE 3: GRADED RETURN TO FULL ACTIVITY

3

ACTIVITY	DURATION	CRITERIA TO PROGRESS
i. Non-contact training Return to full team training sessions - non-contact activities only	Minimum 1 session	Remaining completely free of any concussion-related symptoms*
ii. Rest/recovery day	Minimum 1 day	Remaining completely free of any concussion-related symptoms*
iii. Limited contact training Full team training allowed -able to participate in drills with incidental and/or controlled contact (including tackling)	Minimum 1 session	Remaining completely free of any concussion-related symptoms*
iv. Rest/recovery day	Minimum 1 day	a) Remaining completely free of any concussion-related symptoms* b) Player is confident to return to full contact training c) Player has medical clearance to return to full contact training
v. Full contact training	Minimum 1 session	Remaining completely free of any concussion-related symptoms*
vi. Rest/recovery day	Minimum 1 day	a) Remaining completely free of any concussion-related symptoms* AND b) player is confident to return to play

*If concussion related symptoms reappear at any time in stage 3 (Graded Return to Full Activity) then the player should go back to the previous symptom-free step in stage 2 (Recovery) and seek medical review from a doctor.

STAGE 4: UNRESTRICTED RETURN TO PLAY

4

! MEDICAL OVERSIGHT BY A DOCTOR IS VERY IMPORTANT IN THE MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSION.

Any player with a concussion or suspected concussion must consult with a doctor:

- As soon as possible after the initial injury - to confirm the diagnosis and provide guidance on management
- Before the player is allowed to return to full contact training.

The player should also see a doctor if progress is slow or stalls due to symptoms at any stage.

The day-to-day progression and movement between the steps of the program can be guided by the player and the medical personnel at the club (physio, sports trainer, first aider) to ensure that they remain symptom-free and confident to progress.

The earliest that a player may return to play (once they have successfully completed a graded loading program **and they have obtained medical clearance**) is on the 12th day after the day on which the concussion was suffered.