



Post-Concussion Five Steps to Return to Activity

(After Being Diagnosed with a Concussion and Cleared by a Medical Professional)

Before beginning the five steps to return to activity, the athlete must be cleared by a medical professional and completely free of concussion symptoms for a period of 48 hours. The five steps are intended to provide a gradual return to activity that ensures the athlete has fully recovered from the concussion. Only one step may be attempted per day (so the minimum time to return to full activity after beginning the five step process is five days). If concussion symptoms are observed at any time during the five step process, the athlete should immediately be removed from the activity. The athlete must again be concussion symptom free for 48 hours before re-initiating the gradual five step return process. The athlete must always begin again at Step 1 whenever concussion symptoms occur in the gradual return to activity process.

Step 1

- Begin with light aerobic exercise(no head movement)
- 5 to 10 minutes on an exercise bike, walking or light jogging with the only goal being to raise the athlete's heart rate
- There should be no weight lifting, jumping or hard running at this step

Step 2

- Add activities that increase an athlete's heart rate, and incorporate limited body or head movement
- Moderate jogging, brief running, moderate-intensity stationary biking and moderate-intensity weight lifting (reduced time and reduced weight from an athlete's typical routine)

Step 3

- Bump it up to heavy non-contact physical activity
- Sprinting/running, high-intensity stationary biking, the players regular weight lifting routine and non-contact sport specific drills

Step 4

- Reintegrate the athlete in practice sessions
- Full contact in controlled practices

Step 5

- Return to game competition

During each step, the coach needs to monitor for the return of any concussion symptoms. If the athlete's symptoms come back or new symptoms arise, stop the activity and have the athlete re-evaluated by a medical professional.