



## RETURN-TO-PLAY GUIDELINES

While suffering a concussion should be taken seriously, you can recover fully if the brain is allowed to rest and recuperate. A return to normal activities, such as school and sports, should be a gradual, step-wise process. These steps should be implemented with caution, and if symptoms return at any point, it means that the brain has not yet healed.

### RETURN-TO-PLAY

**Step 1:** No activity, only complete rest. This means no work, no school, and no physical activity. When symptoms are gone, a physician or clinical neuropsychologist must be consulted 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 weightlifting. 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.

**NOTE:** **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.