Return to Activity

This tool is a guideline for managing an individual’s return to activity following a concussion and does not replace medical advice. Timelines and activities may vary by direction of a health care professional.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>STAGE 1: Initial rest</th>
<th>STAGE 2: Prepare to return to activity</th>
<th>STAGE 3: Increase your activity</th>
<th>STAGE 4: Gradually resume daily activities</th>
<th>STAGE 5: Full return to activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial rest</strong></td>
<td>• Stay home in a quiet and calm environment</td>
<td>• Test your readiness by trying some simple, familiar tasks such as reading, using the computer, or shopping for groceries</td>
<td>• Gradually return to usual activities and decrease rest breaks</td>
<td>• Full class schedule, with no rest breaks or accommodations</td>
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<td>• Limit your screen time (computer, television, and smartphone use)</td>
<td>• Keep the time on each activity brief (e.g., less than 30 minutes) and take regular rest breaks</td>
<td>• Start with less demanding activities before harder ones</td>
<td>• Full work schedule with usual expectations for productivity</td>
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<td>• Keep any social visits brief</td>
<td>• Go for walks or try other light physical activity (e.g., swimming, stationary bike), without becoming short of breath</td>
<td>• Physical activity might include jogging, lifting light weights, or non-contact sport drills, gardening, dancing</td>
<td>• Student athletes should not return to sport competition until they have fully returned to school</td>
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<td>• Sleep as much as your body needs while trying to maintain a regular night sleeping schedule</td>
<td>• Keep bed rest during the day to a minimum. It is unlikely to help your recovery</td>
<td></td>
<td>Only return to contact sports or dangerous job duties (e.g., operating heavy equipment, working from heights) when cleared by your doctor.</td>
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</table>

Note: The goal for each stage is to find the 'sweet spot' between doing too much and too little.

**STAGE 2:**

Get ready to return

- When symptoms start to improve OR after resting for 2 days max, BEGIN STAGE 2
- Tolerates simple, familiar tasks, BEGIN STAGE 3
- Tolerates further increase in level of activity, BEGIN STAGE 4
- Tolerates partial return to usual activities, BEGIN STAGE 5

**STAGE 3:**

Start your return

Note: You could start returning to school or work on a part-time basis (e.g., a few hours per day).

**STAGE 4:**

Continue your return

- Resuming daily activities can be challenging because your energy and capacity for activities may be variable, but should improve day-to-day or week-to-week.
- Students and workers may require accommodations, such as reduced hours, reduced workload, extra time for assignments, or access to a quiet distraction-free work environment.

**STAGE 5:**

- Full return to activity
- Full class schedule, with no rest breaks or accommodations
- Full work schedule with usual expectations for productivity
- Student athletes should not return to sport competition until they have fully returned to school
- Only return to contact sports or dangerous job duties (e.g., operating heavy equipment, working from heights) when cleared by your doctor.

If new or worsening symptoms are experienced at any stage, go back to the previous stage for at least 24 hours. You may need to move back a stage more than once during the recovery process.

Each person will progress at his/her own pace. It is best not to “push” through symptoms. If you do too much, your symptoms may worsen. Decrease your activity level and your symptoms should settle. Then continue to gradually increase your activity in smaller increments.

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