



Gradual Return to Sports Participation Program Following a Concussion

After a student-athlete has sustained a concussion they will be started on a supervised Gradual Return to Sports Participation Program only after they have received written medical clearance from the licensed health care provider. Ideally the program will be supervised by the school certified athletic trainer (ATC).

Rehab Stage	Functional Exercise	Objective of Stage
1. No activity	Complete physical and cognitive rest	Recovery
2. Light aerobic activity	Walking, swimming, stationary cycling keeping intensity <70% maximum heart rate; no resistance exercises	Increase heart rate
3. Sport-specific exercise	Specific sport-related drills but no head impact	Add movement
4. Noncontact training drills	More complex training drills; may start light resistance training	Exercise, coordination, cognitive load
5. Full-contact practice	After medical clearance, participate in normal training	Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaches
6. Return to play	Normal game play	

(Adapted from 2010 AAP Sport-Related Concussion in Children and Adolescents; 2008 Zurich Concussion in Sport Group Consensus)

- Each stage in concussion rehabilitation should last no less than 24 hours with a minimum of 5 days required after activity is started to consider a full return to competition.
- If symptoms recur during the rehabilitation program, the student-athlete should stop immediately.
- Once asymptomatic after at least another 24 hours, the student-athlete should resume at the previous asymptomatic level and try to progress again.
- Student-athletes must contact their licensed health care provider if symptoms recur.
- Any student-athlete with multiple concussions or prolonged symptoms may require a longer concussion-rehabilitation program, which is ideally created by a physician who is experienced in concussion management.

As each sports concussion is unique, the concussion management plan will be individualized for each student-athlete. The ultimate goal of the concussion program is to allow a safe return to play and minimizing any long-term health problems from a concussion.