

Graduated Return to Sport Strategy

(Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport – the 5th International Conference on Concussion in Sport held in Berlin, October 2016)

Stage	Aim	Activity	Goal of each step
1	Symptom-limited Activity	Daily activities that do not provoke symptoms	Gradual reintroduction of work/school activities
2	Light Aerobic Exercise	Walking or stationary cycling at slow to medium pace; No resistance training	Increase heart rate
3	Sport-specific Exercise	Running or skating drills; No head impact activities	Add movement
4	Non-contact Training Drills	Harder training drills, e.g., passing drills; May start progressive resistance training	Exercise, coordination and increased thinking
5	Full Contact Practice	Following medical clearance, participate in normal training activities (NE Concussion Awareness Act 2012)	Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaching staff
6	Return to Sport	Normal game play	Normal game play

- An initial period of 24–48 hours of both relative physical rest and cognitive rest is recommended before beginning the Return to Sport progression.
- There should be at least 24 hours (or longer) for each step of the progression.
- If any symptoms worsen during exercise, the athlete should go back to the previous step. Resistance training should be added only in the later stages (stage 3 or 4 at the earliest).
- If symptoms are persistent (e.g., more than 10–14 days in adults or more than 1 month in children), the athlete should be referred to a healthcare professional who is an expert in the management of concussion.

