



Return to Work

Each stage must take a minimum of 24 hours, but could last longer depending on the individual and their specific situation.
If new or worsening symptoms are experienced at any stage, the person must go back to the previous stage for at least 24 hours.
 The individual may need to move back a stage more than once during the recovery process.

For more information about the recommended sequence for resuming activities after a concussion, please consult the reverse side of this document →

Objective of each stage	REST	STAGE A	STAGE B	STAGE C	STAGE D	STAGE E	STAGE F
Acceptable activities	<p>Stay home in a quiet and calm environment and keep any social visits brief</p> <p>Try activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to soft music • Short and basic board and/or card games • Crafts <p>Rest as much as needed while trying to maintain a regular night sleeping schedule</p>	<p>Progressively increase periods of activity to up to 30 minutes</p> <p>Try simple, familiar activities that do not provoke symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy reading • Drawing <p>Add activities that do not increase heart rate or break a sweat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking at a slow/medium pace • Daily household tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meal preparation - Doing dishes, - Doing the laundry <p>Take frequent rest breaks as needed</p> <p>Consult the Return to Sport/Physical Activity Strategy to follow a gradual progression towards usual physical activity</p>	<p>Progressively increase periods of activity to up to 4 hours with rest breaks as needed</p> <p>Try some more challenging activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the computer • Grocery shopping • Stationary cycling at slow to medium pace <p>Attempt to commute to work to assess if it aggravates symptoms</p> <p>May complete up to 2 hours of light work-related duties at home (if possible)</p> <p>Consider contacting the workplace to prepare a personalized return to work plan</p>	<p>Note: The individual may proceed directly to Stage D, unless advised otherwise</p> <p>May attempt to return to work with maximum usage of accommodations</p> <p>Consider starting with less demanding activities before tackling more difficult ones</p> <p>Possible workplace accommodations may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wearing sunglasses • Working in a quieter area • Allowing for extended breaks 	<p>Return to work with modified duties according to the agreed upon personalized plan</p> <p>Individuals may continue to require accommodations such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced hours • Extra time to complete tasks • Access to a quiet distraction free work environment <p>Gradually increase the number of working hours per day as tolerated</p>	<p>Note: The individual may proceed directly to Stage F, unless advised otherwise</p> <p>Continue to gradually eliminate the use of accommodations at work as tolerated</p> <p>Accommodations should be discontinued in trial periods, to ensure that they are no longer needed</p> <p>May resume regular work hours</p>	<p>Resume full work schedule without any accommodations</p> <p>Return to usual expectations for productivity at work</p> <p>NOTE: Individuals should seek medical clearance before returning to higher-risk job duties that may have safety implications (e.g., operating heavy equipment, working from heights, driving).</p>
Activities to be avoided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No screen time (computer, television and smartphone use) • No alcohol, tobacco, caffeine and no other stimulant use <p>No driving until consulted by a healthcare professional for safety considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit screen time (computer, television and smartphone) • Keep bed rest during the day to a minimum • No intense physical exertion or sports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit alcohol, tobacco, caffeine and other stimulant use • Avoid activities that involve carrying heavy physical loads such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Backpacks, - Shopping bags 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No carrying heavy physical loads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid high-risk job duties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid possible overexertion 	
Timeline	<p>When symptoms start to improve OR after resting for 2 days max :</p> <p>Begin STAGE A</p>	<p>Able to tolerate 30 minutes of activity without any new or worsening symptoms for at least 24 hours?</p> <p>No: Return to Rest Yes: Begin Stage B</p>	<p>Able to tolerate 4 hours of activities (with rest breaks) without any new or worsening symptoms for at least 24 hours?</p> <p>No: Return to Stage A Yes: Begin Stage C</p>	<p>Able to tolerate a return to the workplace environment without any new or worsening symptoms for at least 24 hours?</p> <p>No: Return to Stage B Yes: Begin Stage D</p>	<p>Able to complete approved activities for this stage without any new or worsening symptoms for at least 24 hours?</p> <p>No: Return to Stage C Yes: Begin Stage E</p>	<p>Able to tolerate regular work hours (with minimal accommodations) without any new or worsening symptoms for at least 24 hours?</p> <p>No: Return to Stage D Yes: Begin Stage F</p>	<p>Able to tolerate a full workload for at least 24 hours?</p> <p>No: Return to Stage E Yes: The Return to Work Strategy is completed</p>

This tool is a guideline for managing a person's return to work following a concussion diagnosis and does not replace medical advice. Timelines and activities may vary by direction of a health care professional. Contact a primary healthcare provider or seek medical help as soon as possible if symptoms persist or worsen. Persistent concussion symptoms occur when they last more than 2 weeks for adults or more than 4 weeks for youth under the age of 18.

Adapted from: 2016 Berlin Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport and the Return to Work guidelines by BC Injury Research and Prevention Unit, Concussion Awareness Training Tool. 201907V1



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It's important to remember that the necessary recovery time following a concussion is different for each person and can vary from days to weeks to months. When symptoms start to improve or after resting for two days maximum, you may begin a step-wise process to gradually increase cognitive and physical activity. Since both **Return to Work** and **Return-to-Sport/Physical Activity Strategies** can be done in parallel, we encourage you to consult the Return-to-Sport/Physical Activity Strategy and the Recommended Sequence for Resuming Activities after a Concussion to better understand the gradual progression through the necessary steps for recovery.



RETURN TO SPORT/PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY

1 Symptom-limited Activities

- The objective of this stage is to ensure a gradual reintroduction of daily activities that do not provoke symptoms
- The person may resume certain activities such as walking at a slow to medium pace and daily household tasks (e.g. meal preparation, doing dishes, doing the laundry) for short periods of time (15 to 20 minutes).
- Avoid intense physical exertion or sports

2 Light Aerobic Activity

- The objective of this stage is to increase the person's heart rate
- The person may resume certain activities such as jogging or stationary cycling at a slow to medium pace for short periods of time (up to 30 minutes).
- Avoid all resistance or weight training

3 Individual Physical Activity with No Contact

- The objective of this stage is to add movement to complete training drills individually.
- The person may progressively increase the intensity and duration of their workout (up to 60 minutes) with activities such as
 - Skating drills in hockey
 - Running drills in soccer
 - Shooting drills in basketball
- Avoid activities involving head impacts or jarring motions

4 No-contact Training Drills

- The objective of this stage is to resume more complex training drills requiring greater coordination and an increased cognitive load (e.g. passing drills)
- The person may start progressive resistance training
- The person may participate in activities which involves high speed stops or sprinting
- Avoid activities involving body contact

A medical clearance is required before allowing for participation in unrestricted practice during full contact team practice or with activities involving a risk of collision and fall (moving to stage 5).

5 Unrestricted Practice

- The objective of this stage is to restore the person's confidence and assess their functional skills during practices
- The person may proceed with a full return to training (with or without teammates) which may include activities involving risks of collision, fall or contact.
- Avoid participation in any competitive activity

6 Return to Game-play and/or Competition

- The objective of this stage is to provide a continued assessment of the person's athletic performance
- The person may proceed with a full participation in any physical activity, practice, game or sport competition
- Avoid disrespecting the rules of the sport and bad sportsmanship

INDIVIDUALIZED WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS

The use of accommodations at the workplace that support the person as they move through the stages of the Return to Work Strategy is important for their recovery. We encourage you to keep an open line of communication with your employer and/or supervisor to help assess if the accommodations that were implemented are adequate and to help identify possible solutions to manage any new or worsening symptoms.

Post-Concussion Symptoms	Impact on Performance at Work	Potential Strategies and/or Approaches
Headache and fatigue	Difficulty concentrating, paying attention or multitasking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure to drink fluids as needed to help avoid possible dehydration • Allow the person to take frequent breaks and/or rest in a quiet area • Provide flexible leave for health problems
Difficulty remembering or processing speed	Difficulty remembering new information, instructions and learned information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the use of a daily organizer • Divide assignments into smaller tasks • Allow for extra time to complete work-related tasks
Difficulty paying attention and/or concentrating	Limited ability to focus on work-related tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep distractions to a minimum • Reduce and/or prioritize assignments and other work-related tasks • Consult instructions and check frequently to ensure comprehension
Light and/or noise sensitivity	Difficulty working in certain environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the brightness and exposure to smart boards, computers and television screens • Allow the person to wear sunglasses or use earplugs as needed • Arrange strategic seating (i.e. away from window or noisy environments)

RECOMMENDED SEQUENCE FOR RESUMING ACTIVITIES AFTER A CONCUSSION

REST for at least 24 hours



RETURN TO WORK STRATEGY



RETURN TO SPORT/ PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY

Individuals should not have any new or worsening symptoms at these stages

A Light Activities at Home

B Preparation for a Return to Work

C Return to Work with Accommodations

D Gradual Increase in Workload

E Elimination of Workplace Accommodations

F Return to Unrestricted Work

1 Symptom-limited activities

2 Light Aerobic Activity

3 Individual Physical Activity with No Contact

4 No-contact Training Drills

These steps can be completed in parallel

Individuals should not have any symptoms at these stages

Important:

If needed, a return to unrestricted work (Stage F) and a return to no-contact training drills (Stage 4) must be completed without any signs or symptoms of concussion before requesting a medical clearance to proceed to unrestricted practice (Stage 5).

Medical Clearance

5 Unrestricted Practice

6 Return to Game-play and/or Competition