

Concussion Recovery Protocol (CRP)

Post-Concussion RECOVERY and RETURN TO PLAY (RRTP) Guidelines



These Recovery *and* Return To Play (RRTP) Guidelines are designed to monitor and ensure a symptom-free recovery from concussions.

Concussed athletes, listen up! It's in your best interests to follow this step-by-step approach, which will enable you to achieve a safe, full recovery before resuming ANY vigorous or sports-related activities. It is absolutely essential to fulfill the requirements and goal of each of the 5 Steps before moving on to the following step.

These 5 steps are the safest, surest, self-determined way to preserve and ensure your health, now and in the future...

ACHIEVING A SYMPTOM-FREE CONCUSSION RECOVERY and SAFE RETURN TO SPORT

STEP 1) REST AND RECOVERY

- No physical or cognitive activity. Nothing. Shut it down. Just chill. Easily said, not easily done.
- Minimize eye use. *Avoid reading and e-screen time; no books, papers, phones, computers, TV, or movies.*
- Avoid all stress-producing influences. Limit or avoid interacting with others, in person or electronically.
- Recline, rest, sleep, listen to calming, instrumental (non-energizing) music. The prime focus is to be at peace in a peaceful environment.

The goal of Step 1? A full recovery. To become totally symptom-free. Being back to normal is the best possible result. When all symptoms are completely gone, good job. You're past the trickiest part of all. Now move on to Step 2...

STEP 2) VERY LIGHT EXERCISE

- 10 minutes a day, total. Stretching, yoga, slow-paced stationary bike, a brief walk. No challenges.
- *Limit e-screen time, cognitive stressors, unnecessary interactions with others.*
- If any symptoms reappear at any phase of Step 2, stop immediately. Resume and complete Step 1.

The Goal of Step 2? To remain totally symptom-free while gently engaging in very brief physical activity. The result is the solid psychological victory achieved by remaining symptom-free while engaging in light physical activities. No symptoms in Step 2? None at all? Excellent sign. Move on to Step 3...

STEP 3) SPORT-SPECIFIC AEROBIC ACTIVITY

- 15-30 minutes, maximum
- NO CONTACT
- Warming up, jogging, shadow boxing, route running, limited weight training (30% of usual weights and reps)

The goal of Step 3? To remain symptom-free while minimally engaging in physical sporting activities. This progress restores confidence in your ability to heal and actually accelerates the natural healing processes.

If any symptoms appear in Step 3, Stop. You're doing too much. Go back and complete Step 1. No symptoms at all in Step 3? Nice work. You're well on your way back. Move on to Step 4...

STEP 4) ON FIELD OR INDOOR PRACTICE

- Aggressive drills, running, teammate interaction
- NO CONTACT
- No checking, no blocking, no heading the ball, no heavy bag impacts, no sparring, no grappling

The goal of Step 4? To remain symptom-free while aggressively engaging in non-contact sports activities. Step 4 properly prepares you for the last step, which is sport-specific activities with forceful contact. No symptoms at all in Step 4? Seriously? Strong sign. You're really close. Go to Step 5...

STEP 5) AGGRESSIVE PRACTICE WITH BODY CONTACT

- Preferably cleared by a concussion-savvy health care professional
- Grappling, sparring, checking, wrestling, blocking, tackling. Back to work, full go...

The goal of Step 5? To remain symptom-free while engaging in routine sport-specific physical activities. No symptoms at all in Step 5? *Welcome back. You're there. Game on...*

Concussion Symptoms Checklist and Follow Up Guidelines

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unconsciousness | <input type="checkbox"/> Vomiting | <input type="checkbox"/> Forgetfulness | <input type="checkbox"/> Concentration difficulties |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blackouts | <input type="checkbox"/> Headaches | <input type="checkbox"/> Grogginess (body) | <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seeing flashes/stars/other | <input type="checkbox"/> Dizziness | <input type="checkbox"/> Neck tension/tightness | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulties sleeping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disorientation | <input type="checkbox"/> Brief memory loss | <input type="checkbox"/> Ringing ears | <input type="checkbox"/> Lethargy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of coordination | <input type="checkbox"/> Impaired vision | <input type="checkbox"/> Nausea | <input type="checkbox"/> Low frustration tolerance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tingling/numb extremities | <input type="checkbox"/> Attention deficit | <input type="checkbox"/> Jaw clicking/popping | <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immobile extremities | <input type="checkbox"/> Fogginess (head) | <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing difficulties | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internal Cranial Pressure | <input type="checkbox"/> Upper spinal tension/tightness | <input type="checkbox"/> Loud noise/bright light intolerance | <input type="checkbox"/> Prior Concussions? |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> How many? When? |

Can a single symptom mean you have a concussion?

Even one "concussion-like" symptom is a sign. It's time to stop. Know it. Recognize it. Act on it. Knee, hip, and tooth replacements may be unwelcome, but they're doable. Brains? Not so much...

If you knowingly suffer any concussion symptoms, especially prior to an official diagnosis by a qualified professional, the smartest move is to voluntarily discontinue all activity immediately, on your own.

Post diagnosis

Once you've been diagnosed as concussed, the healthiest and wisest move is to set aside any ideas of returning to sport especially while symptoms remain. On this point there are literally **NO EXCEPTIONS**.

To safeguard your future health, return to sporting practice or play *only after*:

- 1) you are completely symptom-free
- 2) you've successfully gone through all the vital R RTP steps with absolutely no recurrence of symptoms
- 3) you've been cleared to return to sport by an up-to-date, concussion-savvy doctor or health care pro

Spontaneous Symptoms?

If concussion symptoms (headache, dizziness, confusion, odd visual perceptions, lack of focus) return *with or without* renewed activity, recognize it and stop what you're doing immediately. Get some rest in a quiet, peaceful environment. Seek qualified concussion-savvy guidance and *restart Step 1 of R RTP guidelines*.

Remember...

If protecting your future is a priority, immediately disengage if you have even ONE concussion symptom.

Some more tightly-managed sports organizations require all their RTP steps be monitored by a doctor and that each step requires being symptom free for at least one full day, minimum. No fast flow or "quickie" RTP clearances are allowed. It's a wise path to follow.

To ensure your future health, return to sport *only after* you've asymptotically passed through each of the R RTP steps and have been cleared by a concussion-savvy health care professional.