Return to physical activity following concussion

Football

Stage	Activity	Football specific exercise	Objective of the stage
1	• No physical activity • Complete physical and cognitive rest	• No activity	• Recovery and elimination of symptoms
2	• Light aerobic activity	• 10 to 15 minutes of walking at home or at field, or stationary bike	• Add light aerobic activity and monitor for symptom return
3	• Moderate aerobic activity • Light resistance training	• 20 to 30 minutes of jogging with helmet • Light weight lifting (one set of 10 reps)	• Increase aerobic activity and monitor for symptom return
4	• Noncontact football-specific drills	• Moving in/out of three-point stance, bear crawls through tunnel, tires, step over bags (vertical and lateral), QB/center exchange, QB drop backs, passing, break downs and plant, jump cuts, backpedaling, match the hips, up/downs **Start without helmets; progress to helmets and shells if symptom free*	• Maximize aerobic activity • Accelerate to full speed with change of directions (cuts) • Introduce rotational head movements • Monitor for symptoms
5	• Limited contact football drills	• Stage 4 workout in full pads • Hit/push pads then sled (focus on technique—head up, square up, stay low), step and hit, run and hit, leverage drill, punch drill	• Maximize aerobic activity • Add deceleration/rotational forces in controlled setting • Monitor for symptoms
6	• Full contact practice (after medical clearance)	• Normal training activities	• Frequent assessments throughout the practice • Monitor for symptoms
7	• Return to play	• Normal game play	• Assess frequently • Monitor for symptoms • Consider one side of the ball only, no special-teams play

May begin Stage 2 when symptoms are markedly diminished, and can tolerate a partial school day

May begin Stage 3 when a full school day is tolerated

May progress to the next stage every 24 hours as long as symptoms do not worsen

It is recommended that you seek further medical attention if you fail more than three attempts to pass a stage.

choa.org/concussion 404-785-KIDS (5437)

This is general information and is not specific medical advice. Always consult with a doctor or healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns about the health of a child.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta

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