

Return to physical activity after a concussion

Football

Stage	Activity	Football exercises	Goal
1	Rest	Rest other than everyday walking	Promote recovery shortly after injury
2	Light aerobic activity	10 to 15 minutes of walking or stationary bike	- Add light aerobic activity - Watch if symptoms return
3	- Moderate aerobic activity - Light resistance training	20 to 30 minutes of jogging - Light weight lifting (1 set of 10 reps)	- Increase aerobic activity - Watch if symptoms return
4	- High intensity activity - Non-contact football drills	- Sprints and agility drills - Moving in and out of 3-point stance - Bear crawls through tunnel, tires and step over bags (vertical and lateral) - QB/center exchange, QB drop backs and passing - Break downs and plant, jump cuts, backpedaling, match the hips and up/downs Start without helmet. Move to helmets and shoulder pads if symptom free	- Maximize aerobic activity - Accelerate to full speed with change of directions (cuts) - Start rotational head movements - Watch if symptoms return
5	- High intensity activity - Limited contact football drills	- Sprints, agility drills and normal weight training - Hit/push pads, then sled (focus on technique - head up, square up, stay low) - Step and hit, run and hit, leverage drill, and punch drill Wear full pads	- Maximize aerobic activity - Add high intensity strength training - Add deceleration/rotational forces in controlled setting - Watch if symptoms return
6	Full contact practice (after cleared by a provider)	- Normal training activities - Normal scrimmages	- Frequent assessments during practice - Watch if symptoms return
7	Return to play	Normal game play	- Return to normal game play - Consider 1 side of the ball only and no special teams play

Other guidelines:

If possible, a school athletic trainer or responsible adult should monitor the student as they move through each stage.

The student:

- May start Stage 2 when symptoms are improving and they can tolerate partial school days.
- May start Stage 3 when they can tolerate full school days with NO concussion symptoms.
- May move to next stage every 24 hours as long as symptoms do not return DURING or AFTER work out.
- May NOT move to Stage 6 without written clearance from a medical provider.
- Should return to their provider if they have trouble completing these stages without symptoms.

