**Concussion**

Temporarily altered brain function after trauma to the head

**Common symptoms**

- Somatic symptoms: Headache
- Cognitive symptoms: Amnesia, feeling in a fog
- Emotional symptoms: Lability, mood disorders
- Behavioural signs: Irritability
- Physical signs: Loss of consciousness, disturbed gait/balance
- Cognitive impairment: Slow reaction times, difficulty concentrating
- Sleep disturbance: Insomnia

**One step at a time**

Recommend a gradual return to work and play, which is thought to reduce risks of:

- Delayed recovery
- Persistent symptoms
- Poor cognitive performance
- Other musculoskeletal injuries
- Long term consequences
  - Including chronic traumatic encephalopathy

**Suggested recovery progression**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work or school</th>
<th>Consider time off or adaptation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Driving</td>
<td>Advise against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td>Advise against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport with risk of head impact</td>
<td>Advise against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading and screen watching</td>
<td>Minimise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2–3 days minimum**

- Gradual return to normal as symptoms permit
- If symptoms permit
- Return to activities of daily living
- Advise against
- Advise against
- Minimise
- If symptoms permit

**2 weeks minimum**

- Maximum head impact risk for activities
- Light aerobic activity
- Moderate exercise
- Low risk training drills
- None
- None
- Low
- Brisk walking
- Static cycling
- More complex training
- Can add resistance exercises
- Normal training activities
- Normal activity

**5–10 days minimum**

- Full risk training
- Return to activity
- Normal
- Normal

**Progress if symptoms have resolved**

**23 days (children) 19 days (adults)**

Minimum time between injury and return to activity with a predictable risk of head impact

**Progress if back to normal work/school**

**Review by doctor**

Current UK guidance recommends that people recovering from concussion should be reviewed/assessed by a doctor before beginning activities which risk exposure to head trauma. The doctor's role is to ensure the patient:

- has returned to work or school
- is symptom free

Reviewing the "graduated return to sporting activity" as above

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Consensus statement on concussion in sport (Zurich, 2013). doi: 10.1136/bjsports-2013-092313