

# PLAYER'S HEALTH

## Creating a Return to Play Strategy

Ensuring an athlete is ready to return to play is a big part of the concussion protocol. You often want to ease them back into activity and not overwork or overdue their return. By easing an athlete in, you can document and test to ensure they have fully recovered from their concussion. Below we will outline a sample return to play strategy to implement for your athletes.

1. Beginning - Sideline assessment or medical assessment – If your concussion protocol includes a pre-season baseline assessment, this test (done by a medical professional) will measure the new data based on the baseline test
2. Rest – As a part of the recovery process, try to limit cognitive driven tasks and screen time. Make sure to consult the education system stakeholders.
3. Limited Activity – Perform simple exercise activity. This is typically done by walking.
4. Light Exercise – Begin working on cardio to prepare to return to practices. Don't push too hard but begin getting the heart rate to elevate.
5. Exercise specific to the sport – Elevate the heart rate more than before and begin adding movement. Participate in conditioning with the team at a slower pace.
6. Begin training in a non-contact capacity – Begin working back into the flow of the game and focus on getting mentally in the game. Don't push yourself to full speed.
7. Medical Check-up – If at this point an athlete is symptom free, a medical professional will clear them to begin practicing
8. Return to practice – To ensure an athlete is ready to return to play, they must return to practice without any limitations.
9. Return to gameplay – If progression from practice has built up confidence and fitness, an athlete can return to gameplay and will have completed the Return to Play protocol.