

Return to physical activity after a concussion

Football

Stage	Activity	Football exercises	Goal
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rest other than everyday walking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote recovery shortly after injury
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Light aerobic activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 to 15 minutes of walking or stationary bike 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add light aerobic activity Watch if symptoms return
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate aerobic activity Light resistance training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 to 30 minutes of jogging Light weight lifting (1 set of 10 reps) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase aerobic activity Watch if symptoms return
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High intensity activity Non-contact football drills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximize aerobic activity Accelerate to full speed with change of directions (cuts) Start rotational head movements Watch if symptoms return
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High intensity activity Limited contact football drills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximize aerobic activity Add high intensity strength training Add deceleration/rotational forces in controlled setting Watch if symptoms return
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full contact practice (after cleared by a provider) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normal training activities Normal scrimmages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent assessments during practice Watch if symptoms return
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return to play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normal game play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

