



## 6-Step Return to Play Progression

It is important for an athlete's parent(s) and coach(es) to watch for concussion symptoms after each day's return to play progression activity. Athletes should only progress to the next level of exertion if they are not experiencing symptoms at the current level. If symptoms return at any step, an athlete should stop these activities as this may be a sign the athlete is pushing too hard. Only after additional rest, when the athlete is once again not experiencing symptoms for a minimum of 24 hours, should he or she start again at the previous step during which symptoms were experienced. In some cases, the athlete may be able to work through one step in a single day, while in other cases it may take several days to work through an individual step. It may take several weeks to months to work through the entire 5-step progression.

### **Step 1: Back to regular activities (such as school)**

Athlete is back to their regular activities (such as school) and has the green-light from their healthcare provider to begin the return to play process. An athlete's return to regular activities involves a stepwise process. It starts with a few days of rest (2-3 days) and is followed by light activity (such as short walks) and moderate activity (such as riding a stationary bike) that do not worsen symptoms.

### **Step 2: Light aerobic activity**

Begin with light aerobic exercise only to increase an athlete's heart rate. This means about 5 to 10 minutes on an exercise bike, walking, or light jogging. No weight lifting at this point.

### **Step 3: Moderate activity**

Continue with activities to increase an athlete's heart rate with body or head movement. This includes moderate jogging, brief running, moderate-intensity stationary biking, moderate-intensity weightlifting (less time and/or less weight from their typical routine).

### **Step 4: Heavy, non-contact activity**

Add heavy non-contact physical activity, such as sprinting/running, high-intensity stationary biking, regular weightlifting routine, non-contact sport-specific drills (in 3 planes of movement).

### **Step 5: Practice & full contact**

Young athlete may return to practice and full contact (if appropriate for the sport) in controlled practice.

### **Step 6: Competition**

Young athlete may return to competition.

This information is reproduced from the CDC HEADS UP website [https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/basics/return\\_to\\_sports.html](https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/basics/return_to_sports.html)