

***Please note: The RETURN TO PLAY information listed below is provided by ASA just as a beginning reference point. Further medical consultation is strongly recommended anytime a concussion is diagnosed.***

When managing an athlete with concussion, a health care professional's management plan should cover both returning to school and to play, and should:

- monitor both physical and cognitive activities
- consider concussion history
- be individualized to the athlete

**Baseline (Step 0):** As the baseline step of the Return to Play Progression, the athlete needs to have completed physical and cognitive rest and not be experiencing concussion symptoms for a minimum of 24 hours. *Keep in mind, the younger the athlete, the more conservative the treatment.*

### **Step 1: Light Aerobic Exercise**

The Goal: only to increase an athlete's heart rate

The Time: 5 to 10 minutes

The Activities: exercise bike, walking, or light jogging

Absolutely no weight lifting, jumping or hard running

### **Step 2: Moderate Exercise**

The Goal: limited body and head movement

The Time: Reduced from typical routine

The Activities: moderate jogging, brief running, moderate-intensity stationary biking, and moderate-intensity weightlifting

### **Step 3: Non-contact Exercise**

The Goal: more intense but non-contact

The Time: Close to Typical Routine

The Activities: running, high-intensity stationary biking, the player's regular weightlifting routine, and non-contact sport-specific drills. This stage may add some cognitive component to practice in addition to the aerobic and movement components introduced in Steps 1 and 2.

### **Step 4: Practice**

The Goal: Reintegrate in full contact practice

### **Step 5: Play**

The Goal: Return to competition - see [http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/return\\_to\\_play.html](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/return_to_play.html)

The **Return to Play Progression** process is best conducted through a team approach and by a health professional who knows the athlete's physical abilities and endurance. By gauging the athlete's performance on each individual step, a health care professional will be able to determine how far to progress the athlete on a given day.

It is important to monitor symptoms and cognitive function carefully during each increase of exertion. 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. THANK YOU for being careful and cautious! *Remember – when in doubt, sit them out.*