

Returning to School after a Concussion

- Each stage is at least 24 hours. Move to the next stage only when activities are tolerated without new or worsening symptoms.
- If symptoms re-appear, return to the previous stage for at least 24 hours.
- If symptoms don't improve, but continue to get worse, contact your doctor or get medical help immediately.

AT HOME

Cognitive & physical rest
(24-48 hours)



OK if tolerated

- ✓ Short board games
- ✓ Short phone calls
- ✓ Camera photography
- ✓ Crafts

Not OK

- ✗ School
- ✗ Physical exertion/
stair climbing
- ✗ Organized sports

If tolerated, limited amounts of

- TV
- Computer/cell phone use
- Reading

Stage
1

Light cognitive
activity



OK if tolerated

- ✓ Easy reading
- ✓ Limited TV
- ✓ Drawing/LEGO/
board games
- ✓ Some peer
contact

Not OK

- ✗ School
- ✗ Work
- ✗ Physical exertion/
stair climbing
- ✗ Organized sports

If tolerated, limited amounts of

- Computer/cell phone use

Stage
2

School-type work/
Light physical activity



OK if tolerated

- ✓ School-type work
in 30 min. chunks
- ✓ Light physical
activity
- ✓ Some peer
contact

Not OK

- ✗ School
attendance
- ✗ Work
- ✗ Physical exertion/
stair climbing
- ✗ Organized sports

READY
FOR
NEXT
STAGE?

Symptoms start to improve OR
after resting for 48 hours max.

READY
FOR
NEXT
STAGE?

Tolerate 30 mins. of cognitive
activity at home

READY
FOR
NEXT
STAGE?

Tolerate up to 60 mins. of
cognitive activity in 2-3 chunks

AT SCHOOL

Stage 3a Part-time school Light load



OK if tolerated

- ✓ Up to 120 mins. of cognitive activity in chunks
- ✓ Half-days at school, 1-2 times a week
- ✓ Some light physical activity

Not OK

- ✗ Music/Phys. Ed class
- ✗ Tests/exams
- ✗ Homework
- ✗ Heavy physical loads (e.g. backpack)
- ✗ Organized sports

READY FOR NEXT STAGE? Tolerate school work up to 120 mins. a day for 1-2 days/week

Stage 3b Part-time school Moderate load



OK if tolerated

- ✓ Limited testing
- ✓ School work for 4-5 hours/day in chunks
- ✓ Homework up to 30 mins./day
- ✓ 3-5 days of school/week
- ✓ Decrease learning accommodations

Not OK

- ✗ Phys. Ed class/physical exertion
- ✗ Standardized tests/exams
- ✗ Organized sports

READY FOR NEXT STAGE? Tolerate school work 4-5 hours/day in chunks for 2-4 days/week

Stage 4a Nearly normal workload



OK if tolerated

- ✓ Nearly normal cognitive activities
- ✓ Routine school work as tolerated
- ✓ Homework up to 60 mins./day
- ✓ Minimal learning accommodations

Not OK

- ✗ Phys. Ed class
- ✗ Standardized tests/exams
- ✗ Full participation in organized sports

READY FOR NEXT STAGE? Tolerate full-time academic load without worsening symptoms

Stage 4b Full time



OK if tolerated

- ✓ Normal cognitive activities
- ✓ Routine school work
- ✓ Full curriculum load
- ✓ No learning accommodations

Not OK

- ✗ Full participation in sports until medically cleared. (See Return-to-Sport Strategy)

READY FOR NEXT STAGE? Stages 5-6 of the Return-to-Sport Strategy