



Concussion/Safe Return to Play Policy

Approved April 5th, 2014 by ROWONTARIO Board of Directors

1. If during a practice (on or off the water), training, regatta, camp or clinic an athlete, sustains a direct or indirect force to the head and subsequently exhibits signs, symptoms and/or functional changes consistent with a concussion. He/she is to be immediately removed from play and immediate medical assessment received. Coaches are never to make a determination in the field on their own. (Please note this is not age dependent, all rowers, coaches, officials and volunteers must be treated in the same fashion).
2. Following their removal from play, any person suspected to have sustained a concussion is to be assessed by a medical doctor, preferably an emergency physician, to determine the extent of the athlete's injury and to rule out further pathology. The physician may make recommendations in addition to those described in the 2008 Zurich Guidelines and the ROWONTARIO policy, and these are to be discussed with the individual that was injured (and guardian for those under 18).
3. Individuals diagnosed with a concussion should rest until they are symptom-free and should then begin a step-wise symptom-limited program with stages of progression, only after they are without symptoms for a 24 hour period. Those steps include:

Step 1: No Activity, only complete rest.

Step 2: Light aerobic exercise.

Step 3: Sport-specific exercise.

Step 4: Begin drills without body contact.

Step 5: Begin drills with body contact.

Step 6: Return to play.

(Six step process attached to this document as recommended by Think First Canada)

There should be a minimum 24 hours for each stage involved and the athlete should return to the rest stage should symptoms recur.

MEDICAL CLEARANCE IS REQUIRED BEFORE ATHLETE RETURNS TO PLAY

ROWONTARIO supports Think First Canada and the set up of an online training protocol for coaches, volunteers, athletes and parents to educate them on Concussion education.

RETURN TO PLAY GUIDELINES



A concussion is a serious event, but you can recover fully from such an injury if the brain is given enough time to rest and recuperate. Returning to normal activities, including sport participation, is a step-wise process that requires patience, attention, and caution.

STEP 1: NO ACTIVITY, ONLY COMPLETE REST.

Limit school, work and tasks requiring concentration. Refrain from physical activity until symptoms are gone. Once symptoms are gone, a physician, preferably one with experience managing concussions, should be consulted before beginning a step wise return to play process.

STEP 2: LIGHT AEROBIC EXERCISE.

Activities such as walking or stationary cycling. The player should be supervised by someone who can help monitor for symptoms and signs. No resistance training or weight lifting. The duration and intensity of the aerobic exercise can be gradually increased over time if no symptoms or signs return during the exercise or the next day.

SYMPTOMS? Return to rest until symptoms have resolved.
If symptoms persist, consult a physician.

NO SYMPTOMS? Proceed to **Step 3** the next day.

STEP 3: SPORT SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES.

Activities such as skating or throwing can begin at step 3. There should be no body contact or other jarring motions such as high speed stops or hitting a baseball with a bat.

SYMPTOMS? Return to rest until symptoms have resolved.
If symptoms persist, consult a physician.

NO SYMPTOMS? Proceed to **Step 4** the next day.

STEP 4: BEGIN DRILLS WITHOUT BODY CONTACT.

SYMPTOMS? Return to rest until symptoms have resolved.
If symptoms persist, consult a physician.

NO SYMPTOMS? The time needed to progress from non-contact exercise will vary with the severity of the concussion and with the player. **Proceed to Step 5 only after medical clearance.**

STEP 5: BEGIN DRILLS WITH BODY CONTACT.

SYMPTOMS? Return to rest until symptoms have resolved.
If symptoms persist, consult a physician.

NO SYMPTOMS? Proceed to **Step 6** the next day.

STEP 6: GAME PLAY.

www.thinkfirst.ca
Before you Return to Play!

The ThinkFirst Canada Concussion resources were developed based on the Zurich Guidelines outlined in the Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport and have been reviewed with great thanks to the ThinkFirst Concussion Education and Awareness Committee.

RETURN TO PLAY GUIDELINES



NEVER RETURN TO PLAY IF YOU STILL HAVE SYMPTOMS!

A player who returns to active play before full recovery from the first concussion is at high risk of sustaining another concussion, with symptoms that may be increased and prolonged.

HOW LONG DOES THIS PROCESS TAKE?

These steps do not correspond to days! It may take many days to progress through one step, especially if the concussion is severe. As soon as symptoms appear, the player should return to rest until symptoms have resolved and wait at least one more day before attempting any activity. The only way to heal a brain is to rest it.

HOW DO I FIND THE RIGHT DOCTOR?

When dealing with concussions, it is important to see a doctor who is knowledgeable in concussion management. This might include your physician or someone such as a sports medicine specialist. Your family doctor may be required to submit a referral to see a specialist. Contact the Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine (CASEM) to find a sports medical physician in your area. Visit www.casm-acms.org for more information. You can also refer your doctor to the concussion pages of thinkfirst.ca for more information.

WHO DO THESE GUIDELINES APPLY TO?

These guidelines were developed for children over the age of 10; those younger may require special guidelines, and more conservative treatment and care. Return to Play Guidelines should be at the discretion of the physician.

WHAT IF MY SYMPTOMS RETURN DURING THIS PROCESS?

Sometimes these steps can cause symptoms of a concussion to return. This means that the brain has not yet healed, and needs more rest. If any signs or symptoms return during the Return To Play process, they should stop the activity and rest until symptoms have resolved. The player must be re-evaluated by a physician before trying any activity again. Remember, symptoms may return later that day or the next, not necessarily during the activity!

www.thinkfirst.ca
Before you Return to Play!

The ThinkFirst Canada Concussion resources were developed based on the Zurich Guidelines outlined in the Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport and have been reviewed with great thanks to the ThinkFirst Concussion Education and Awareness Committee.