

## ROW ONTARIO

### Concussions



### Removal from Sport Procedures

We are concerned about the long-term health of all our participants. We have instituted a Concussion Management Policy to help protect their health and in compliance with Ontario's Rowan's Law.

The policy is that if any individual suffers any kind of injury where there is potential for there to have been direct or indirect force to the head, neck, face, or upper body AND is experiencing or demonstrating any concussion related signs or symptoms, the individual will be removed from activity immediately.

The designated person to make this decision will be the coach and/or regatta host. In the case of a suspected concussion, the individual may not be in a condition to assess themselves or make appropriate decisions. The decision will be made erring on the side of caution in support of the long-term health of the participant.

For individuals under 18, all suspected concussions or situations that occurred that potentially could result in a concussion will be reported to their guardian. The guardian should monitor the individual for delayed signs and symptoms for the next 72 hours.

All individuals of any age with a suspected concussion should see to a medical doctor (or nurse practitioner) for medical assessment and diagnosis.

*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.*

*If diagnosed with a concussion, please turn over for a rowing specific return to sport protocol. Remember that each individual and each concussion is different and individualized medical advice should be followed.*

*For more information and ROWONTARIO's complete Concussion Policy please go to:  
[www.rowontario.ca/rowontario-concussion-management-information/](http://www.rowontario.ca/rowontario-concussion-management-information/)*



## Return to Rowing Protocol

*If you are diagnosed with a concussion, follow the stages to return under medical guidance*

Each step must take a **minimum of one day** but could last longer, depending on the athlete and their specific situation. A physician, preferably one with experience managing concussions, should be consulted before beginning the gradual process to return.

The athlete should spend a minimum of 24 hours at each step before progressing on to the next. It is common for an athlete's symptoms to worsen slightly with activity. This is acceptable as they progress through steps 1 to 4 of return to sport, so long as symptom exacerbation is:

- **mild:** symptoms worsen by only one to two points on a zero-to-10 scale, and
- **brief:** symptoms settle back down to pre-activity levels within an hour.

### **STEP 1: Symptom limited activity – Goal: A gradual reintroduction of activity**

Light cognitive and physical activity (such as daily activities and light chores) can be initiated as long as they don't worsen symptoms beyond the acceptable mild and brief levels described above.

### **STEP 2: Light aerobic exercise Goal: Increased heart rate**

Activities such as walking or stationary cycling. The athlete should be supervised by someone who can help monitor for symptoms and signs. Light resistance training as tolerated can be incorporated. The duration and intensity of the aerobic exercise can be gradually increased over time if symptoms or signs during the exercise or the next day remain within acceptable range.

### **STEP 3: More Diverse Cardio Goal: Add movement**

Activities such as light running or gentle body weight resistance exercises 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.

### **STEP 4: Building Cardio with Increased Cognitive Aspects Goal: Exercise, coordination, & increased thinking**

Activities such as indoor rowing and increased resistance training can be added to activities from previous steps. Can incorporate agility type movements and other coordination related activities at this Step.

**Proceed to Step 5 only after medical clearance in writing and completed return to school (if applicable)**

### **STEP 5: On water practice, once cleared Goal: Restore confidence & assess functional skills by coaching staff**

Coaches will allow return to the water in gradually challenging conditions. Start on water activities in a crew boat or a boat with stabilising pontoons. All rowers should have a steady state row (20-40 minutes) in calm water for their first on the water experience. Subsequent practices for flat water rowers can incorporate intensity bursts and intervals. Coastal rowers can then also incorporate light to moderate waves and then boat entry and exits.

**Symptoms?** Return to previous step and only engage in activities as tolerated. Medical clearance will be required again before resuming Step 5.

**No symptoms?** Proceed to Step 6 after minimum of two on water situations without symptoms.

### **STEP 6: Competition**

Return to rowing with normal activities