



## Step-Wise Return to Play Protocol (MSHSL Standards)

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Return to play decisions are complex. An athlete may be cleared to return to competition when the player is free of all signs & symptoms of a concussion at rest & during exercise and cleared by an Allied Health Care Professional. Once free of symptoms and signs of concussion, a stepwise symptom free exercise process is required before a player can return to competition. Below is the accepted best-practice for return to play after a concussion supported by the MSHSL, NCAA, and professional sports organizations.

- A period of 24-48 hours of both relative physical & cognitive rest is recommended before beginning the Return to Play Progression.
- Each step requires a minimum of 24 hours.
- The player can proceed to the next level only if s/he continues to be free of any symptoms and or signs at the current level.
- If any symptoms or signs recur, the player should drop back to the previous level.
- After a concussion has been diagnosed by an Allied Health Care Professional, only a AHCP can authorize a subsequent return to play.

The return-to-play after a concussion is a step-wise process.  
**EACH STEP REQUIRES A MINIMUM OF 24 HOURS.**

DATE	Step-wise Progression MUST be performed in sequence
	<b>Symptom-limited activity:</b> Daily activities that do not provoke symptoms.
	<b>Light activity:</b> Aerobic exercise such as walking, stationary bike. No weight training.
	<b>Sport-specific activity:</b> running/sprinting, skating, agility drills. No head contact.
	<b>Non-contact activity:</b> return to modified sport activity/practice, non-contact drills, weight training.
	<b>Full-contact activity:</b> return to full participation after medical clearance.
	<b>Game Play</b>

It is important to understand that every concussion is unique and the timeframe for complete recovery cannot be determined at the time of initial injury. Twin Cities Orthopedics is proud to offer concussion management resources through the TCO Concussion Program including neurocognitive (ImPACT) testing, vestibular & ocular therapy, exertional therapy, return to learn planning, and final clearance for return to activity. Please contact your clinic with any questions or concerns.

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