

Returning to School After a Concussion

Please note, this advice is not a 'one size fits all' approach. You may need to tailor your return to school in conjunction with your teachers and with medical advice.

It's important to find a balance; returning to normal day to day activities can be beneficial for mental wellbeing and concussion recovery, but pushing yourself too soon can result in your symptoms lasting longer.

Introduction

A concussion affects everyone slightly differently. Some people will experience only very brief symptoms before feeling back to normal, but others will feel the effects for longer.

Returning to a normal day to day routine is an important part of your recovery, and if your symptoms aren't too troublesome there is no reason to stay off school. Recent evidence suggests that complete rest following a concussion is not the most effective form of recovery.

Returning to the classroom can sometimes make you feel worse though, so it's important to know what to do if this is the case. The following approaches may be useful to consider.

First 24-48 hours after the injury - Cognitive and Physical Rest

Your symptoms are likely to be at their most severe during the first two days, so a period of relative rest may be required. You may walk, read, and do some daily activities provided that your symptoms are no more than mildly increased. Try and minimise the amount of time spent on screens; this can sometimes worsen your symptoms at this early stage.

Increasing tolerance to thinking activities

Consider increasing mental activities at home (reading, television, games, phone usage). If this doesn't cause more than a mild increase in your symptoms, you may be able to gradually introduce home-based school activities such as homework into 20–30-minute blocks, with rests in between.

Returning to school

Sometimes it's necessary to return to school with some adjustments in place, so it's important that your teacher or form tutor is aware of your injury. You may want to consider:

- Starting with shorter school days
- Taking rest breaks
- Avoiding activities that require extra concentration, such as tests or quizzes
- Taking fewer classes
- Having extra time for homework or assignments

Returning to full academic activity

You can return to full academic activities when you feel able to do so, and catch up on any missed work.

Tips with dealing with a concussion at school

- Sit where you can focus. Choose a spot in the classroom where you're less likely to be distracted.
- If your memory isn't working as well as usual, consider writing down everything you need to remember.
- If your symptoms are significantly worsening and affecting your learning, consider taking a break. You may need to rest in the medical centre for a short while.
- Take things slowly; start with one activity at a time and gradually increase your workload. You can catch up on any missed work once you're feeling better.
- If your symptoms are showing no sign of improvement after a week, consider booking an appointment with one of the Return2play specialists.

Return to School Summary

