

Athletics following a concussion

Athletics is a **low-risk sport** for concussion. Most events — sprinting, distance running, and throws — carry minimal head injury risk compared to contact or ball sports.

Because of this low-risk profile, there is scope for **flexibility in return-to-competition timelines**, particularly for non-contact events (e.g. distance running). However, caution is still needed for technical events with higher risk of falls (e.g. pole vault, hurdles, high jump). The structured pathway below reflects both safety and the possibility of earlier competition.

Earliest day post-injury	Notes	Activity
Day 8	Can start this stage even when still symptomatic but exercise should not significantly worsen symptoms.	<p>Low risk exercise & training Gradual increase in self-directed exercise (running, stationary bike, swimming) supervised weight training etc. Light resistance or body weight training. Focus on fitness</p> <p>Athletics specific exercise Runners: Technique drills (A-skips, high knees), easy tempo runs. Jumpers: Run-ups without full take-off, low box landings. Throwers: Shadow drills, partial-intensity throws with light implements.</p>
<p>R2P Medical Assessment to assess fitness to start a Gradual Return to Sport</p> <p><i>For low-risk events (middle-distance, long-distance running, non-crowded sprints), competition may be acceptable at this point providing the patient is: Symptom-free, has tolerated running drills and tempo work without issues, and competition is non-contact, low tactical complexity (e.g. a solo time-trial race).</i></p>		
Day 15	Only if symptom free at rest for the preceding 14 days	<p>Gradual Return to Athletics training Consider starting with reduced intensity sessions, building up as tolerated.</p> <p>Runners: Race-pace efforts, relay exchanges (non-crowded initially). Jumpers: Controlled full-approach take-offs, progressive landing work. Throwers: Full throws at controlled effort, progressing to competition implements.</p> <p>If remains well, progressing to: Runners: Full race simulation and competition. Jumpers: Competitive jumps with full approach and landings. Throwers: Max effort throws with standard implements.</p>
<p>R2P Medical Assessment to assess fitness to return to unrestricted sport</p>		



Day 21	Only if symptom free at rest for the preceding 14 days AND symptom free during previous stage	Return to full competitive athletics
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