

Football following a concussion

Football is considered a **medium-risk sport** for concussion. While the majority of play involves low-risk activities such as running, passing, and ball control, there are risks from headers, collisions and falls.

Because concussions often occur in contested play, **following a structured return-to-sport pathway** is essential. Returning too early increases the risk of prolonged symptoms and a repeat concussion, which may have long-term health consequences. This pathway ensures safe, gradual progression back to training and competitive football.

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.</p> <p>Focus on fitness</p> <p>Football specific exercise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ball mastery (toe taps, foundations, dribbling in straight lines). - Short ground passes with a partner. - Simple control-and-pass drills. - Unopposed set play walk-throughs.
<p>R2P Medical Assessment to assess fitness to start a Gradual Return to Sport</p>		
Day 15	Only if symptom free at rest for the preceding 14 days	<p>Gradual Return to Football training</p> <p>Consider starting with reduced intensity sessions, building up as tolerated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small-sided games (no heading) - First-touch drills under mild pressure. - Combination play at higher speed. - Reactive passing, rondos, and positional games. <p>If remains well, progressing to: Full unrestricted football in a non-competitive setting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Normal training sessions with aerial challenges and heading. - Full tactical drills, competitive match play.
<p>R2P Medical Assessment to assess fitness to return to unrestricted sport</p>		
Day 21		Return to full competitive football

