

## Rugby following a concussion

Rugby is a **high-risk sport** for concussion due to its physical, collision-based nature. Because of this, rugby players must follow a **strict, staged pathway** before returning to full training and match play. Returning too soon risks not only recurrent concussion but also serious long-term neurological consequences. This below pathway is adapted from England Rugby’s Graduated Return to Activity & Sport pathway to ensure progressive recovery of both **physical and cognitive demands** specific to rugby.

Earliest day post-injury	Notes	Activity
Day 8	Can start this stage even when still symptomatic but exercise should not significantly worsen symptoms.	<p><b>Low risk exercise &amp; training</b> Gradual increase in self-directed exercise (running, stationary bike, swimming) supervised weight training etc. Light resistance or body weight training.</p> <p><b>Focus on fitness</b></p> <p><b>Rugby specific exercise</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Passing and kicking drills (unopposed, standing → jogging).</li> <li>- Catch-pass sequences with predictable movement.</li> <li>- Lineout walk-throughs at reduced intensity.</li> <li>- Shadow running through set plays, no contact.</li> </ul>
<p><b>R2P Medical Assessment</b> 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><b>Gradual Return to Rugby training</b></p> <p>Consider starting with reduced intensity sessions, building up as tolerated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Small-sided conditioned games (touch/tag rules only).</li> <li>- Ball-handling under pressure.</li> <li>- Reactive decision-making drills (e.g. 3v2, changing defensive shapes).</li> <li>- Position specific skills and support play at intensity</li> </ul> <p><b>If remains well, progressing to:</b> Full unrestricted rugby in a non-competitive setting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Full contact tackling drills, defensive sets, scrums, mauls, and rucks.</li> <li>- Full training sessions with competitive match scenarios.</li> </ul>
<p><b>R2P Medical Assessment</b> 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 rugby



