Concussion
Temporarily altered brain function after trauma to the head

Common symptoms
- Somatic symptoms: Headache
- Cognitive symptoms: Amnesia, feeling in a fog
- Emotional symptoms: Lability, mood disorders
- Behavioural signs: Irritability
- Physical signs: Loss of consciousness, disturbed gait/balance
- Cognitive impairment: Slow reaction times, difficulty concentrating
- Sleep disturbance: Insomnia

One step at a time
Recommend a gradual return to work and play, which is thought to reduce risks of:
- Delayed recovery
- Persistent symptoms
- Poor cognitive performance
- Other musculoskeletal injuries
- Long term consequences
- Including chronic traumatic encephalopathy

Suggested recovery progression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work or school</th>
<th>2–3 days minimum</th>
<th>Sx</th>
<th>2 weeks minimum</th>
<th>Sx</th>
<th>5–10 days minimum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consider time off or adaptation</td>
<td>Gradual return to normal as symptoms permit</td>
<td>If symptoms permit</td>
<td>Return to activities of daily living</td>
<td>Return to sporting activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Driving
- Advise against

Exercise
- Advise against
- Return if symptoms permit
- Advise against

Sport, with risk of head impact
- Advise against
- Return if symptoms permit
- Advise against

Reading and screen watching
- Minimise
- Return if symptoms permit

Progress if symptoms have resolved

Minimum time between injury and return to activity with a predictable risk of head impact

23 days (children)
19 days (adults)

If symptoms return, go back to previous stage

Graduated return to sporting activity
Before sport and other activities with a predictable risk of head injury

- Adults: 24 hours per stage
- Children: 48 hours per stage

Maximum head impact risk for activities

1. Light aerobic activity
2. Moderate exercise
3. Low risk training drills
4. Full risk training
5. Return to activity

Progress if back to normal work/school

Review by doctor

Current UK guidance recommends that people recovering from concussion should be reviewed/assessed by a doctor before beginning activities which risk exposure to head trauma. The doctor’s role is to ensure the patient:

- has returned to work or school
- is symptom free

is following the “graduated return to sporting activity” as above

Disclaimer: This infographic is not a validated clinical decision aid. This information is provided without any representations, conditions or warranties that it is accurate or up to date. BMJ and its licensors assume no responsibility for any aspect of treatment administered with the aid of this information. Any reliance placed on this information is strictly at the user’s own risk. For the full disclaimer wording see BMJ’s terms and conditions: http://www.bmj.com/ company/legal-information/