



RETURN TO DAILY LIFE After Concussion



- This tool is to help guide the return to daily life after a concussion, but does not replace medical advice from a health care professional.
- Each stage lasts at least 24 hours and recovery timelines will vary for each injury. Only move to the next stage when activities can be completed without aggravating symptoms. Do not try to rush the recovery.
- If symptoms return or worsen after moving to a new stage, return to the previous stage.
- When introducing new activities, always begin in 5-15 minute intervals with plenty of breaks. Gradually increase the intervals to up to 30-60 minutes as symptoms allow. Do not increase the interval until symptoms are not provoked by the activity.
- If symptoms do not improve within 48 hours after the initial injury, or if symptoms continue to get worse during the recovery, seek medical help immediately.

STAGE
1

Rest and activities
of daily life



During the first 24-48 hours after the injury, create a quiet and calm environment to rest physically and cognitively. Sleep as much as needed - be checked on but not woken up. Minimize screen time during this stage. Avoid caffeine, reading, sports, work, driving, and emotional situations, and keep social visits brief.

Recommended activities:

- Sleep/rest as much as needed
- Light walking/yoga
- Household cleaning/chores
- Preparing meals
- Brief phone calls
- Board/card games
- Other activities that don't require physical or mental exertion

MOVE TO
NEXT
STAGE

When symptoms begin to improve
slightly OR after 48 hours

STAGE
3

Accommodated return to
tasks, part-time to full-time



Continue increasing daily tasks slowly as your symptoms allow. Take breaks as needed and use accommodations if needed to help reduce symptoms. Slowly increase activity level to regular levels while carefully monitoring symptoms. Once at regular levels, slowly experiment with removing accommodations as symptoms allow.

Recommended activities:

- Use accommodations and communicate them to those around you as needed, such as a quiet environment, breaks, more time needed to complete tasks, etc.
- Accommodations should be slowly phased out in test periods to see if symptoms are aggravated. Remove one accommodation at a time and reintroduce the accommodation if symptoms worsen

MOVE TO
NEXT
STAGE

No new/worsening symptoms for 24 hours
after a full day with no accommodations

STAGE
2

Light to moderate
mental & physical activities



Begin trying light physical and mental activities at home and start a consistent sleep schedule, increase to moderate activity as symptoms allow. Increase social interaction by running errands, commuting, social visits, etc. Take breaks and use accommodations where needed (e.g. noise cancelling headphones or sunglasses).

Recommended activities:

- Gradually increased screen use, as symptoms allow
- Reading/sudoku/word puzzles
- Walking/yoga (light)
- Jogging/cycling (moderate)
- Increased social contact
- Simple errands
- Driving/commuting

MOVE TO
NEXT
STAGE

No new/worsening symptoms for 24 hours
after 60 minutes of moderate activity

STAGE
4

Return to
daily life



Return to full activity without concussion-related accommodations.

Monitor symptoms over the next few weeks and reintroduce accommodations as needed. Do not rush your recovery or ignore symptoms.

For more resources
and information:

BrainInjuryNS.com/
Concussion

