

Sports Medicine

Return to Play Guidelines for Sports

STEP 1:

Rest until asymptomatic (physical and mental rest)

Goal: Recovery

STEP 2:

Light aerobic exercise (stationary cycle, walking, swimming); Heart rate < 70% max.

No resistance training

Goal: Increased heart rate

STEP 3:

Sport specific training (wind sprints, cutting drills, up-downs, bear crawls, pushups, crunches, etc.)

Neurocognitive testing

Goal: Dynamic movement and cognitive clearance

STEP 4:

Non-contact training drills (full practice with shells NO CONTACT). Begin progressive resistance training

Goal: Exercise, coordination, and dual task with cognitive load

STEP 5:

Full contact training after medical clearance by MD

Goal: Increase/restore confidence, coaches can assess functional level

STEP 6:

Return to competition

There should be approximately 24 hours (or longer) for each step and the athlete should return to step 1 if symptoms recur. Resistance training should only be added in the later steps (5-7) of program. Medical clearance should be given before return to full contact practice: Step 6.