

G RTP INFORMATION

The best way to return to sport is to follow a gradual re-introduction of exercise in a step-wise progression known as a graduated return to play (**G RTP**) programme as per the following:

Concussion Procedure Step	G RTP Stage	Exercise Mode	Example of Exercise Activity	Progression
5	1	Rest	Complete rest of the brain and body	Medical doctor decides on amount of time needed.
6	2	Light cardiovascular exercise	Light jogging for 10-15 minutes, swimming or stationary cycling at low to moderate intensity. No weights training	If no increased symptoms, start Stage 3 after minimum of 24 hours. If symptoms occur, rest 24 hours & repeat Stage 2.
6	3	Rugby specific exercise	Individual running drills and skills without contact No weights training	If no increased symptoms, start Stage 4 after minimum of 24 hours. If symptoms reoccur or worsen, rest 24 hours & repeat Stage 2, then progress
6	4	Rugby specific non-contact training	More complex training drills e.g. passing drills May start progressive (low level) weights training	If no increased symptoms, review by a medical doctor and presentation of a completed Australian Rugby Concussion Referral & Return Form required before Stage 5. If symptoms reoccur or worsen, rest 24 hours & repeat Stage 3, then progress
7	5	Rugby practice	Full contact practice following completed Australian Rugby Concussion Referral & Return Form being provided to the club or school sport master	Player, coach, parent to report any symptoms to medical doctor. If symptoms reoccur or worsen, then medical doctor to review
8	6	Rugby game	Full contact game	Monitor for recurring symptoms or signs

Rest and Recovery (G RTP Stage 1)

- Stage 1 is the rest and recovery period.
- The amount of rest will be determined by the medical doctor who assesses the player initially.
- Depending on the player’s progression, a follow up consultation with a medical doctor to decide when the player can progress to level 2 may be required but does not need to be in person, e.g. it may be done in liaison with the player’s family, or team physiotherapist.

Return to exercise (G RTP Stages 2 – 4)

- Stages 2 to 4 of the G RTP are the stages where the player returns to light general exercise initially then increases the volume, intensity and specificity of exercise

- A player can only proceed to the next stage of the GRTP if they have no increase in signs or symptoms of concussion at the time of exercise, later that day (after exercise) and on waking the following day.
- The minimum time between stages is **24 hours**, although children and adolescents may require a longer period of time between stages.
- If there is a recurrence or increase of symptoms at any time during the GRTP the player must:
 - ✓ Rest for a minimum of 24 hours until all symptoms and signs have settled.
 - ✓ Return to the previous stage at which they had no symptoms.
 - ✓ Recommence the progression of the GRTP.
 - ✓ If a player has a recurrence of severe symptoms (e.g. requiring them to miss school, study, or work) or repeatedly (more than once) during the GRTP, or if the recurrent symptoms are prolonged (more than 24 hours), the player should be reviewed by their medical doctor.

STEP 7 RECORD & RETURN TO CONTACT TRAINING (GRTP Stage 5)

- The player must provide a completed Australian Rugby Concussion Referral & Return form to their team manager for presentation/submission to the competition manager prior to returning to full-contact training (Stage 5) and/or match play
- Ideally the same medical doctor who consulted the player after the initial injury will review the player and decide on their fitness to return to contact training
- Alternatively, this form may be provided by a medical doctor with experience in assessment and management of sports concussion and knowledge of the Australian Rugby concussion guidance
- It is not ideal to seek medical clearance from inexperienced medical doctors who do not know the medical history of the player (e.g., junior hospital emergency room doctors)
- Players 18* years and under **cannot** return to **contact** training (Stage 5) for **at least 18 days** after all symptoms and signs have disappeared.
- Adult players, 19 years and over, **cannot** return to **contact** training (Stage 5) for **at least 11 days** after all symptoms and signs have disappeared.

***THIS RESTRICTION TO RETURN TO CONTACT TRAINING AND PLAYING APPLIES TO ALL PLAYERS AGED 18 YEARS AND UNDER INCLUDING THOSE PLAYING ADULT RUGBY.**

STEP 8 RETURN TO PLAY (GRTP Stage 6)

A player should only return to play when they have fully recovered from concussion. This means the player **must**:

- Not have any signs or symptoms of concussion at rest or in normal daily activities (school, study or work).
- Have followed the mandatory required rest time away from contact training.
- Have successfully completed the GRTP without any symptoms or signs of concussion (during or after training and contact training).
- Have provided a completed Australian Rugby Concussion Referral & Return form to their team manager for presentation/submission to the competition manager to approve

‘release’ in Rugby Link prior to returning to full-contact training (Stage 5) and/or match play

- Players 18 years and under **cannot** return to **play** (Stage 6) for **at least 19 days** after all symptoms and signs have disappeared.
- Adult players, 19 years and over, **cannot** return to **play** (Stage 6) for **at least 12 days** after all symptoms and signs have disappeared.

Under the Australian Rugby Concussion Guidance (Rugby Public) and World Rugby Regulation 10, the following tables outline the minimum and expected graduated return to play processes after a diagnosed uncomplicated concussion injury occurring on a Saturday game. This is where the player has recovered and has NO symptoms at stage 5 during the GRTP programme. The tables below are examples only.

Table 1: Children and Adolescents (aged 18 years and under)

SAT MATCH – PLAYER shows Signs and Symptoms of Concussion							
Week	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
1	Rest GRTP Stage 1	Rest GRTP Stage 1	Recover GRTP Stage 2	Recover GRTP Stage 2	Recover GRTP Stage 2	Recover GRTP Stage 2	Recover GRTP Stage 2
2	Recover GRTP Stage 3	Recover GRTP Stage 3	Recover GRTP Stage 3	Recover GRTP Stage 4	Recover GRTP Stage 4	Recover GRTP Stage 4	Recover GRTP Stage 4
3	Recover GRTP Stage 4	Recover GRTP Stage 4	Recover GRTP Stage 4	RETURN GRTP Stage 5	RETURN GRTP Stage 6		PLAY MATCH

Table 2: Adult Participants (aged 19 years and over)

SAT MATCH – PLAYER shows Signs and Symptoms of Concussion							
Week	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
1	Rest GRTP Stage 1	Recover GRTP Stage 2	Recover GRTP Stage 2	Recover GRTP Stage 2	Recover GRTP Stage 3	Recover GRTP Stage 3	Recover GRTP Stage 3
2	Recover GRTP Stage 4	Recover GRTP Stage 4	Recover GRTP Stage 4	RETURN GRTP Stage 5	RETURN GRTP Stage 6		PLAY MATCH

Complex concussion scenarios

A standard care pathway only applies to players who have suffered their first concussion in a 12 - month period. Certain players may have the potential for more complex injuries. Players must see a medical doctor experienced in sports concussion management to follow an individualised management plan if they have:

- ✓ ≥ 2 concussions in 12 months.
- ✓ Multiple concussions over their playing career.
- ✓ Concussions occurring with less collision force.
- ✓ Concussion symptoms lasting longer than expected i.e. a few days.