

Post-Concussion Return to Learn/Return to Work Guidelines

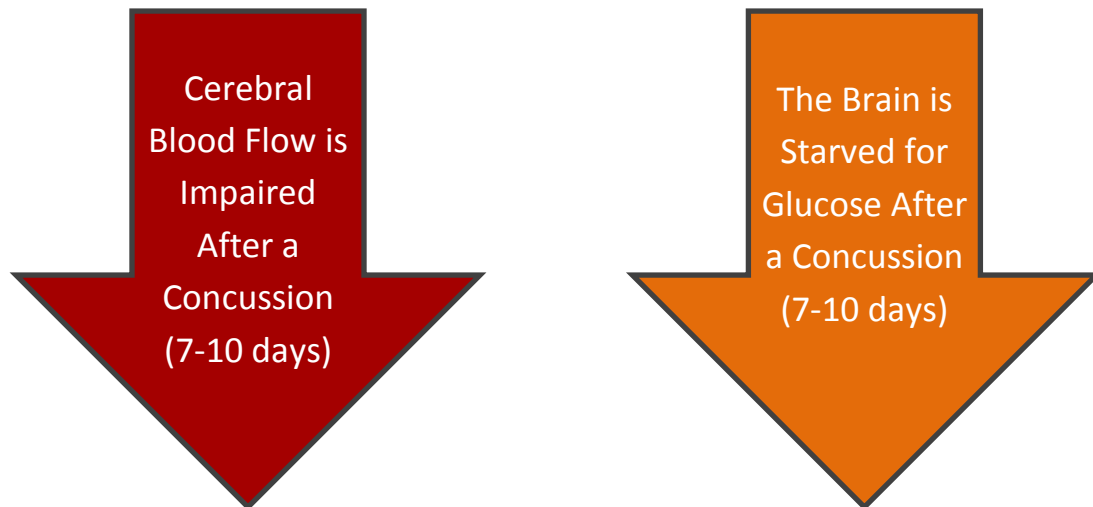
STAGE	DESCRIPTION	OBJECTIVE & TIMELINE
1: Complete Rest	Complete cognitive rest: no computer time, no smartphone/tablet use, no video games, no reading, no homework, no work, no school.	Initial recovery: 1-3+ days
2: Brief Cognitive Activity	Introduce short periods (5-15 minutes) of cognitive activity.	Determine safe cognitive activity threshold – avoid return of concussion symptoms: 2-4+ days
3: More Cognitive Activity	Assuming lack of concussion symptoms from Stage 2 activities, increase cognitive effort to 30-40 minutes.	Determine safe cognitive activity threshold – avoid return of concussion symptoms: 2-4+ days
4: Initial Return to School or Work	Assuming lack of concussion symptoms from Stage 3 activities, and ability to handle 2 hours of cognitive effort each day, resume school and work activity part time (1/2 day)	Partial return to work and school life, with accommodations* as necessary: 4-7+ days
5: Full Day at School/Work	Assuming lack of concussion symptoms from Stage 4 activities, resume school and work activity for a full day.	Full return to work and school life, with accommodations* as necessary: 5-10+ days
6: Resume Full Cognitive Work Load	Assuming lack of concussion symptoms from Stage 5 activities, resume school and work activities at normal levels.	Concussion symptoms have fully resolved, no accommodations* required: 5-10+ days

*Post-concussion accommodations may include taking breaks as needed in a quiet place, and additional time to complete tasks and assignments. **Note that concussion recovery times will vary widely between individuals.**

Return to Learn/Return to Work Guidelines adapted in part from Halstead ME, et al, "Returning to learning following a concussion", [Pediatrics 2013 Nov](#).

Medical Notice: This guide provides general information only, and is not an intent to practice medicine. Always speak with a medical professional about concussion symptoms & treatments.

The Concussion Neurometabolic Cascade⁽¹⁾



Concussions cause an acute energy crisis in the brain, mainly during the first 7-10 days after sustaining a concussion. Giving your brain the time to heal during this critical 7-10 day window after a concussion is very important. Most re-injuries (additional concussions) happen within the first two weeks of the initial concussion, if normal activities and sports are resumed before **all** concussion symptoms have resolved.

(1) Giza CC, Hovda DA. The new neurometabolic cascade of concussion. *Neurosurgery*. [Pubmed PMID: 25232881](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25232881/)

Additional Resources

Healthy Brain Test – www.mybraintest.org/healthy-brain-test

Curious about your brain? Get your free Brain Health Score, and learn how health conditions, exercise, diet choices, sleep, and stress can affect your brain health.

Free Online Memory Testing – www.MemoryHealthCheck.com

Visual-Spatial and Digit Span Tests: <http://bit.ly/1YCICcm> Short link

Short Term Memory Tests: <http://bit.ly/22rWFtN> Short link