

RETURN TO FOOTBALL GUIDELINES FOLLOWING A CONCUSSION

If you have sustained a concussion, this action plan is recommended before fully returning to physical activity. You must complete your recommended period of rest and follow the activity restrictions. You should be symptom-free at rest for 5-7 days before starting the following progressive steps. There should be approximately 24 hours in between each step. If any symptoms return at any time during this action plan, stop working out. Rest until you are symptom-free for 24 hours. Then return to the previous step. If symptoms do not resolve or get worse, seek medical attention.

STEP 1: LIGHT GENERAL CONDITIONING EXERCISES

- **NO CONTACT.**

- Begin with a warm up (stretching / flexibility) for 5-10 minutes.
- Start a cardio workout of 15-20 minutes which can include: stationary bicycle, elliptical, treadmill, fast paced walking, light jog, rowing or swimming.
- 50% intensity.

STEP 2: GENERAL CONDITIONING AND FOOTBALL SPECIFIC SKILL WORK DONE INDIVIDUALLY

- **NO CONTACT.**

- Begin with a warm up (stretching / flexibility) for 5-10 minutes.
- Increase intensity and duration of cardio workout to 20-30 minutes.
- Begin football skill work: footwork drills, running drills, running patterns around cones and dummies, stationary throwing and catching a football.
- 50% intensity.

STEP 3: GENERAL CONDITIONING AND FOOTBALL SPECIFIC SKILL WORK DONE INDIVIDUALLY AND WITH A TEAM-MATE

- **NO CONTACT.**

- Increase duration of session to 60 minutes. Begin resistance training including neck and core strengthening exercises.
- Begin drills with a partner: dynamic throwing and catching, taking handoffs, one on one receiver vs. defensive backs.
- Begin walk-throughs of offensive and defensive plays.
- 75% intensity.

STEP 4: GENERAL CONDITIONING AND FOOTBALL SPECIFIC SKILL WORK AND TEAM DRILLS

- **NO CONTACT. NO SCRIMMAGES.**

- Resume pre-injury duration of practice and team drills.
- Practice passing drills: patterns, handoffs, dynamic throwing and catching.
- Continue with walk-throughs of offensive and defensive plays.
- Review blocking and tackling techniques. Focus on skills needed.
- 75-90% intensity.

STEP 5: FULL TEAM PRACTICE WITH BODY CONTACT

- **CONTACT. SCRIMMAGES.**

- Participate in a full practice to get yourself back in the lineup. If completed with no symptoms, discuss with the coach about getting back in the game.
- 90-100% intensity.

Do not progress until the following is achieved:

- Coaches must make sure that the athlete has regained his/her pre-injury skill-level.
- The child or teen is confident in his/her ability to return to activity.

STEP 6: RETURN TO COMPETITION.