

# FACT SHEET Concussion Recovery



When it comes to concussion in rugby, proper healing time is non-negotiable. Every community player, regardless of age or skill level, must observe a minimum 21-day stand-down period before returning to match participation. The Graduated Return to Play Protocol outlines the **earliest possible** return timeline, but each player's recovery will vary based on symptom progression. This crucial recovery time helps safeguard long-term health and playing future.

During your minimum 21-day break from rugby, you need to follow two important steps:

1. Gradually return to learning or work - (Through the GRTL/W).
2. Slowly get back into exercise and then playing rugby - (Through the GRTP).

These steps are based on what doctors and scientists around the world say is best for recovery.

Before you can play rugby again, you need to be able to:

- Go to school or work without symptoms.
- Do your normal daily tasks without needing special changes.
- Exercise without having symptoms recur.

Only when you can handle your everyday life should you think about returning to rugby.

## NZR's Graduated Return to Learn / Work:

Key considerations: If symptoms continue with mental activity, stop the activity until symptoms ease

Step	Recommended activity:	Goal of step:
<b>1</b> Relative rest	<i>Typical daily activities without provoking symptoms. (Reduce screen time). Start with 5-15 min at a time and gradually build up.</i>	<i>Gradual return to typical daily activities.</i>
<b>2</b> School/work activities	<i>Homework, reading, or other cognitive activities outside the classroom/workplace.</i>	<i>Increase tolerance to cognitive work.</i>
<b>3</b> Return to school/work part-time	<i>Gradual introduction of school/work. May need to start with a partial school/workday or with increased breaks during the day. Limiting bright, noisy or crowded environments may also help manage symptoms.</i>	<i>Increase cognitive activities.</i>
<b>4</b> Return to school/work full-time	<i>Gradually progress school/work activities until a full day can be tolerated.</i>	<i>Return to full academic/work activities.</i>

# NZR's Graduated Return to Play:



## KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

- Symptoms must be progressively improving.
- A player must be symptom free for 14 days prior to commencing stage 4.
- If symptoms worsen, rest for 24hrs and then try again but drop back a step.
- If symptoms persist or worsen, seek medical advice.
- Minimum timeframe of 24 hrs between steps before progressing.

Step:	Recommended activity:	Goal of step:	Minimum time
<b>1</b> Relative rest	Activities of daily living and reduced screen time	Gradual reintroduction of school / work.	Days 1 - 2
<b>2</b> Light to moderate exercise	Symptom-guided low to moderate intensity activity such as walking or jogging.	Increase heart rate and monitor tolerance to exercise.	Days 2 - 14
<b>3</b> Individual sport-specific exercise	Individual training (e.g., running, change of direction, burpees) no risk of head impact.	Add movement. Tolerate changes in direction and body orientation.	
<b>4</b> Non-contact training drills	Include more challenging drills (e.g., multiplayer training, passing).  Re-introduce weight training.	<b>START THIS STEP ONLY IF YOU HAVE HAD NO SYMPTOMS FOR THE PAST 14 DAYS</b>  Resume usual intensity of exercise, coordination, and increased thinking.	Days 14 - 18
<b>SEEK MEDICAL CLEARANCE</b>			
<b>5</b> Build to full contact training	Build into participating in normal training activities, including contact drills.	Restore confidence and assess recovery.	Days 18 - 20
<b>6</b> Return to Play	If symptom free through Step 5, then eligible for match participation after a minimum of 24hrs.	Full return to play with no restrictions.	Earliest Day 21