



**FOOTBALL  
AUSTRALIA**

# **COMMUNITY SPORTS RELATED CONCUSSION GUIDELINES**

## **QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE**

**CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS (<19Y)  
GRADED RETURN TO PLAY PROGRAM**

***"IF IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT."***

Each stage should be at least 24 hours and any exacerbation of symptoms should be mild only and return to baseline prior to commencing the next activity or stage.

The timeframes specified for progression through each Return to Play level specified in the table are a guide and are dependent on individual variability in a player's symptomatic response to a SRC episode. Symptoms may dictate a slower graded return.

**Importantly, for a community footballer, there must be a minimum of 14 days symptom-free at rest before a return to full contact training and a minimum 21 days from the SRC event before a return to competitive match play on the basis that the player was symptom-free at rest for a minimum of 14 days.**

A more conservative approach to determining symptom exacerbation should exist with Children (defined here as <19years), with a more cautious approach to moving through the steps. If in doubt, sit them out.

<b>RETURN TO LEARN OR PLAY STEPS</b>	<b>TIMELINE FOLLOWING SRC</b>	<b>PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STEPS TO FOLLOW</b>	<b>COGNITIVE ACTIVITY STEPS TO FOLLOW</b>
<b>Step 1</b>	24 - 48 hours	<b><i>Relative Rest &amp; Recovery</i></b> Physical and cognitive rest. Minimise physical activity for a minimum 24 hours following injury.	<b><i>Relative Rest &amp; Recovery</i></b> Minimise screen time and high concentration/focus activities for a minimum 24 hours following the injury.
<b>Step 2</b>	24 – 48 hours	<b><i>Resume daily living</i></b> Resumption of activities of daily tasks involving short duration and low demand activities.  Only mild temporary symptoms should be present.	<b><i>Resume daily living</i></b> Resume screen time and low concentration activities in moderation.
<b>Step 3</b>	48 – 72 hours	<b><i>Light exercise</i></b> Resume light aerobic exercise and avoid resistance exercise or activities requiring head movement.  Walking, swimming or stationary cycling with a low heart rate, breathing frequency and minimal effort or exertion.	<b><i>Light cognitive work</i></b> Resume at home activities and cognitive work, including reading, writing and screen time without exacerbating symptoms.  Consider resuming cognitive activities at home only.
<b>Step 4</b>	4 – 5 days	<b><i>Moderate exercise</i></b> Increase to moderate aerobic exercise, including walking, swimming or stationary cycling with a moderate heart rate, increased breathing frequency and some effort or exertion.  Sports-specific skills with minimal movement or head movements.	<b><i>Moderate cognitive work</i></b> Resume activities and cognitive work, screen time in both school and home environments based on no exacerbation of symptoms.  On returning to school or learning environment, allow more regular and longer breaks or time to complete tasks.

<b>Step 5</b>	5 – 7 days	<b><i>Running &amp; Sports-specific drills</i></b>  Commence sport-specific drills with head movement, including straight-line running and running drills.  Sport-specific running drills without contact or head impacts.	<b><i>Increased cognitive work</i></b>  Increased learning activities, cognitive work and screen time at home and school environments in a full-time manner.  Use additional breaks or increased time to complete tasks as needed.
<b>Step 6</b>	7 – 14 days	<b><i>Sports-specific training without contact</i></b>  Increase intensity and duration of running drills ie. non-contact running with side to side movement without collision or contact.  Increased aerobic exercise intensity exercise.  Progression to more complex training drills, e.g., passing drills.  Commence progressive resistance training.	<b><i>Normal cognitive work</i></b>  Normal resumption of all cognitive work, learning activities and screen time with no amendments or alterations.  Catch up on all missed work without exacerbation of symptoms and prior to commencing full return to training.
<b>Step 7</b>  <b><i>Resume full training</i></b>	14 - 21 days	Participate in normal training activities, although monitor extent and type of contact.	<b><i>Normal cognitive work</i></b>  Normal resumption of all cognitive work, learning activities and screen time with no amendments or alterations alongside normal training activities.
<b>Step 8</b>  <b><i>Return To Competition</i></b>	21 days	Return to competition a minimum 21 days from the SRC event in addition to a minimum 14-day symptom-free at rest.	<b><i>Normal cognitive work</i></b>  Normal cognitive work, learning activities and screen time with no amendments or alterations alongside normal training activities.

## ***IF IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT!***

**This Quick Reference Guide should be considered in conjunction with Football Australia’s Community Sports Related Concussion Guidelines. These guidelines are intended to assist in the management of sports related concussion and do not replace the need to seek medical assessment. This information should not be interpreted as a guideline for clinical practice or legal standard of care.**

