

Contact information of the resource to be reached if needed
(This section must be completed by the health professional
who evaluated the patient)

Link to other useful tools and references (in french):

<http://fecst.inesss.qc.ca/documentation/toutes-les-publications/>

Certain tools are also available in english:

<http://fecst.inesss.qc.ca/en/documentation/publications/>



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Advice for gradually resuming intellectual, physical and sports activities

School-age children | Teenagers | Adults

You or someone you know has sustained a **mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI)**, also called **concussion** ?

This pamphlet offers helpful tips for gradually resuming intellectual, physical and sports activities and facilitating complete disappearance of symptoms and optimum recovery.

Relatives and other key people (employer, school, sports teams) should be notified when the diagnosis is made in order to help apply these tips.

Most people with MTBI report a clear improvement of symptoms within **14 days** after the injury and see symptoms disappear within **1 month**. For some, in particular children, recovery can take longer.

If your condition does not improve significantly after 14 days, if symptoms persist after 1 month or if you are concerned about your condition, contact a family doctor or the specialized resource in your region (see the back of this pamphlet).

COMMON SYMPTOMS in the first few days after MTBI*

- Headaches
- Fatigue – Difficulty sleeping
- Nausea
- Dizziness – Vertigo
- Feeling slowed down
- Concentration or memory problems
- Blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light and noise
- Unusually emotional (e.g. anxiety – irritability)

*This list is not complete – other symptoms may be observed.

WARNING SIGNALS

Seek immediate emergency care if any of the following symptoms appear:

- Loss or deterioration of consciousness
- Confusion
- Repeated vomiting
- Convulsions
- Headaches getting worse
- Significant drowsiness
- Difficulty walking, speaking or recognizing people or places
- Double vision
- High state of agitation, excessive crying



The content of this pamphlet does not replace medical advice. In case of doubt, you should consult a doctor.
This pamphlet must be used once a diagnosis is made; it should not be used to diagnose MTBI.



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INITIAL REST PERIOD

For at least 48 hours, it is suggested to:

- Limit all intellectual activities (work, school routine, leisure) requiring concentration, thinking and memory and avoid any activities that make symptoms worse;
- Seek a calm environment and avoid exposure to any type of screen (cell phone, tablet, computer, TV);
- Limit activities to basic day-to-day requirements (getting dressed, washing dishes, etc.);
- Do not take part in any physical or sports activities;
- Respect food, hydration and sleep needs but avoid full bed rest during daytime;
- Do not drink alcoholic beverages or energy drinks; do not use drugs or take sleep medication;
- Limit your driving if necessary (to be discussed with a doctor).

After the initial rest period, **intellectual activities** (stages 1 to 4) and **physical activities** (stages 1 to 3) may resume gradually in parallel **provided that they do not make symptoms worsen or reappear**.

- The rate of progress must be tailored to each individual; it must take into account the previous level of activity and the desired one.
- **It is normal to feel mild symptoms** while carrying out an activity. Progression through the stages can continue **as long as symptoms do not increase**.
- If symptoms increase or reappear, take an additional day of rest before resuming the activities more gradually.

If job-related duties pose potential risks for oneself or others, it is suggested to discuss with a doctor or the specialized resource in the region about the relevance of undergoing an assessment of work capacities.

OPTIMAL SEQUENCE FOR RESUMING ACTIVITIES AFTER A MTBI



TIPS FOR THE GRADUAL RETURN TO INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITIES

1 AT HOME (AS NEEDED)

- Gradually introduce short periods of intellectual activities (15-20 minutes) such as reading, writing, using the computer, TV, video games, text messages, etc.;
- Move to **stage 2** as soon as condition allows, to limit time away from school or work.

2 GRADUAL RETURN TO STRUCTURED ACTIVITIES (SCHOOL, WORK, LEISURE) – PART-TIME

- Start with half-days, and increase gradually;
- As needed, move to a calm setting or take breaks throughout the activity.

- In the first 2 weeks, avoid activities likely to cause anxiety (e.g. school tests, oral presentations).

3 RETURN TO ACTIVITIES FULL TIME (WITH ADAPTATION MEASURES IF REQUIRED)

- Resume more challenging activities and projects, but limit sources of stress and anxiety;
- Students: start writing exams progressively depending on tolerance.

✓ Move to **stage 4** only if symptoms have subsided during activity and at rest.

4 COMPLETE RETURN TO INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITIES WITHOUT ADAPTATION MEASURES



TIPS FOR THE GRADUAL RETURN TO PHYSICAL AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES

Allow for at least 24 hours to elapse between each stage.

1 VERY LIGHT ACTIVITIES THAT DO NOT INCREASE SYMPTOMS

- Resume simple day-to-day domestic activities, in short periods of time (15 to 20 minutes): taking short walks, cleaning the kitchen, sweeping, etc.

2 LIGHT INDIVIDUAL AEROBIC ACTIVITIES

- Slightly raise heartbeat for short periods of time (20 to 30 minutes): brisk walk, stationary bike, etc.

3 INDIVIDUAL SPORT/ACTIVITY-FOCUSED WORKOUTS

- Gradually increase activity intensity and duration;
- Start workouts with sport or activity-specific movements (e.g. bowling, cycling, pitching, dribbling).

✓ Move to **stage 4** only:

- If no symptoms are felt during activity and at rest;
- After complete return to intellectual activities without adaptation measures.

4 MORE STRENUOUS WORKOUTS (WITH OR WITHOUT TEAMMATES)

- Resume technical workouts requiring more concentration or coordination skills (e.g. tennis or passing drills, practicing a choreography);
- Move gradually to more intense workouts;
- Introduce resistance training (e.g. bodybuilding, shoveling snow).

⊕ Medical authorization is required before moving to **stage 5** for all activities involving risks of collision, fall or contact.

5 UNRESTRICTED WORKOUTS

- Resume complete training – including disciplines involving risks of collision, fall or contact.

6 RETURN TO COMPETITION

- Resume competition after completion of a full workout without restriction (**stage 5**) if symptoms have not reappeared within 24 hours after training;
- Remain vigilant if symptoms reappear and, as required, return to the previous stage.