

Figure 3 New Zealand Accident Commission Corporation guidelines on graduated return to education, work and sport

GRADUATED RETURN TO EDUCATION/WORK AND SPORT PROTOCOL		
Day 0 = Day of the injury/concussion		
Stage 1	Day 1–2	Relative rest for 24–48 hours (i.e. light activities of daily living that do not provoke symptoms are ok) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise screen time • Gentle exercise (i.e. walking around the house)
Stage 2		Minimum of 24 hours between stages before progressing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradually introduce daily activities • Activities away from school/work (introduce TV, increase reading, games etc) • Exercise – light physical activity (e.g. short walks outside)
Stage 3	Day 2–13	Symptoms should be progressively improving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase tolerance for mental and exercise activities • Increase study/work-related activities with rest periods • Increase intensity of exercise guided by symptoms
Stage 4		If symptoms worsen drop back a stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to work/study and sport training • Part time return to work/education • Start training activity without risk of head impact
Stage 5	Earliest Day 14	Return to normal work/study and sport-specific training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of Stages 1–4 AND • Fully integrated into work or school AND • Symptom free • And ≥ Day 14 post-injury → reintegration into full sport-specific training can occur
Stage 6	Earliest Day 21	Return to sports competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of Stage 5 AND • Symptom free during sports training • AND ≥ Day 21 post-injury • AND the (player) has received medical clearance from a qualified medical professional (from a general practice or primary care team).

Source: NZ Accident Compensation Corporation. *Sport concussion in New Zealand: National guidelines*. 2024. NZ ACC: Wellington.