# Strategy for Return to School after a Concussion

1. Each stage is at least 24 hours. Move to the next stage only when activities are tolerated without new or worsening symptoms.  
2. If symptoms re-appear, return to the previous stage for at least 24 hours.  
3. If symptoms don’t improve, but continue to get worse, contact your doctor or get medical help immediately.

## AT HOME

### Stage 1: Light cognitive activity

**OK if tolerated**
- Easy reading
- Limited TV
- Drawing/LEGO/board games
- Some peer contact

**Not OK**
- School
- Physical exertion/stair climbing
- Organized sports

If tolerated, limited amounts of:
- Computer/cell phone use

**Ready for Next Stage?**
- Tolerate 30 mins. of cognitive activity at home

### Stage 2: School-type work/Light physical activity

**OK if tolerated**
- School-type work in 30 min. chunks
- Light physical activity
- Some peer contact

**Not OK**
- School attendance
- Work
- Physical exertion/stair climbing
- Organized sports

If tolerated, limited amounts of:
- Computer/cell phone use

**Ready for Next Stage?**
- Tolerate up to 60 mins. of cognitive activity in 2-3 chunks

## AT SCHOOL

### Stage 3a: Part-time school/Light load

**OK if tolerated**
- Up to 120 mins. of cognitive activity in chunks
- Half-days at school, 1-2 times a week
- Some light physical activity

**Not OK**
- Music/Phys. Ed class tests/exams
- Homework
- Heavy physical loads (e.g. backpack)
- Organized sports

**Ready for Next Stage?**
- Tolerate school work up to 120 mins. a day for 1-2 days/week

### Stage 3b: Part-time school/Moderate load

**OK if tolerated**
- Limited testing
- School work for 4-5 hours/day in chunks
- Homework up to 30 mins./day
- 3-5 days of school/week
- Decrease learning accommodations

**Not OK**
- Phys. Ed class/physical exertion
- Standardized tests/exams
- Organized sports

**Ready for Next Stage?**
- Tolerate school work 4-5 hours/day in chunks for 2-4 days/week

### Stage 4a: Nearly normal workload

**OK if tolerated**
- Nearly normal cognitive activities
- Routine school work
- Homework up to 60 mins./day
- Minimal learning accommodations

**Not OK**
- Phys. Ed class
- Standardized tests/exams
- Full participation in organized sports

**Ready for Next Stage?**
- Tolerate full-time academic load without worsening symptoms

### Stage 4b: Full time

**OK if tolerated**
- Normal cognitive activities
- Routine school work
- Full curriculum load
- No learning accommodations

**Not OK**
- Full participation in sports until medically cleared. (See Return-to-Sport Strategy)

**Ready for Next Stage?**
- Stages 5-6 of the Return-to-Sport Strategy

---

Adapted from: Parachute’s Canadian Guideline on Concussion in Sport (2017) • Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport (McCrary et al., 2017) • Cat’s Return To School • McMasterU’s CanChild Return to School Guideline • Opheo’s Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines