

SETTING UP A CONCUSSION PROTOCOL

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

While concussion protocols differ by setting, most healthcare professionals agree on the components that should be included. Concussion protocol requirements may also differ according to country, state, and local laws or specific organizations.

Use these steps as a starting point for setting up a reliable concussion protocol:

1. DEFINE “CONCUSSION”

With a definition in place, everyone can agree on what a concussion is and how it affects the brain.

2. EDUCATE STAKEHOLDERS

Specify who needs to be educated (athletes, parents, coaches, etc.), what information is given, and how participants verify they understand the information. You can find a wealth of educational resources [here](#).

3. BASELINE TEST STUDENTS

[Baseline testing](#) gives healthcare providers objective data about an individual's pre-injury brain function that helps them determine the extent of the head injury and track progress when compared to [post-injury tests](#).

4. SET REMOVAL FROM ACTIVITY CRITERIA

Determine removal from activity criteria, the length of time an individual will be removed, and who can make return to activity decisions.

5. HAVE SIDELINE ASSESSMENTS AVAILABLE

A healthcare provider with specific training on identifying concussions should always be on the sidelines of games and practices. They use tools like [ImPACT Quick Test](#) to help determine if a concussion is suspected.

6. HAVE A PROCEDURE FOR CONCUSSION EVALUATION AND MANAGEMENT

You should have access to a [qualified healthcare provider](#) who can diagnose and treat concussions. A clinical evaluation should include:

- Detailed clinical interview (Use [this symptom scale](#))
- Vestibular-Ocular screening ([Get VOMS info](#))
- Computerized neurocognitive testing (like [ImPACT](#))

7. HAVE A WRITTEN POLICY FOR ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENTS

Many students will need some level of [academic adjustments](#) after a head injury. An academic adjustments protocol should include:

- Education of school personnel
- Definition of roles within school system
- Description of gradual process to guide re-entry to school
- Sample accommodations that may be recommended
- Criteria for when students can return to full cognitive activity

8. DEFINE YOUR RETURN TO ACTIVITY PROCEDURE

Concussion experts agree that [return to activity](#) should follow a graduated, stepwise protocol including:

- Symptom-limited activity
- Light aerobic exercise
- Sport or activity specific exercise
- Non-contact training drills
- Full contact practice
- Return to sport

With these components in place, you'll have a great starting point to creating a **reliable concussion protocol**.