

When Should a Patient Return to Work **After a Concussion?**

1

Initial physical and cognitive rest.

Complete physical and cognitive rest for 1-2 days after a concussion will be helpful for healing.

2

Talk to patients about the benefit of returning to work even if they're not 100%.

Patients may be hesitant to go back to work, but easing back into their daily routine can actually help with recovery. Some patients do not have the luxury to NOT return to work so reassure them that working collaboratively with a supportive employer can help keep symptoms at bay during a workday/shift.

3

Talk to patients' about their workplace environments.

Understanding patients' work environments (e.g. are they in an individual office or an open work space?) will help you coach your patient on appropriate adjustments in their work settings. Encourage patients to negotiate directly with supervisors - work adjustments are more robust when they are setting specific and agreed upon by both employee and employer. Mandated work "accommodations" from a healthcare provider, in a setting where that directive cannot be provided, can actually risk the patient's "fit" at the job.

4

Return to work part-time with appropriate modifications.

Ideally, patients have the opportunity to stay out of work to rest for 1-2 days. When patients' symptoms are less severe (general rule is 5/10), they may return to work (part or full-time) using breaks to manage symptoms.

5

Progress as appropriate.

As patients' symptoms improve, encourage patient and employer to independently and regularly negotiate a gradual decrease in work adjustments and an increase in work duties (and work time - if patient chose to return to work part-time).

6

Return to work.

When patients can tolerate, return to full work duties and full-time work schedule without adjustments.