

CONCUSSION

GRADUATED RETURN TO RIDING

Step 1: No physical/sporting activity

Physical and cognitive rest = recovery

Step 2: Light aerobic exercise

Walking, swimming or stationary cycling, keeping intensity 70% of maximum predicted heart rate. No resistance (weights) training. Consider grooming and feeding your horse as part of this light exercise. Progress to barn and stall (-type) cleaning duties.

Step 3: Equine specific exercise

Running, jumping or bounding type aerobic exercise that replicates the rhythmical movement of horse riding.

Step 4: Low impact training drills

Low risk horse riding, preferably under parental or coach supervision, using the gaits of walking or trotting. Helmet use compulsory.

Preferable to commence riding on safe, calm quiet mount initially

Step 5: Higher impact training drills

Higher risk horse riding, preferably under parental or coach supervision, using techniques of cantering as well as return to jumping. Increase duration and intensity of riding slowly during this period.

Helmet use compulsory.

Movement, coordination and cognitive load with more difficult tasks.

Step 6: Normal pre-injury riding

Return to equestrian event

In all cases, the Graduated Return To Riding Program provides for a minimum of 6 days before the rider can ride at a competitive level. **Advance to the next stage no more quickly than every 24 hours and only if symptoms of concussion are not reproduced with each level of increasing activity.**

Important Points:

- If concussion symptoms return at any stage of the rider's return to riding/racing, the rider must inform the managing medical professional of their symptoms and rest a minimum of 24 hours before resuming the level of activity where symptoms recurred.
- Return to activity should be particularly cautious where children and adolescents are concerned.
- The safety of the rider is the priority and must NOT be compromised.
- The decision regarding return to school/work and clearance to return to restricted activity should always be made by a medical doctor.
- The decision regarding the timing of return to sport/activity should always be made by a medical doctor.