



PERFORMANCE
INJURY CARE & SPORTS MEDICINE

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Concussion Recovery

What can I do to help feel better after a mild traumatic brain injury?

Although most people recover after a concussion, how quickly they improve depends on many factors. These factors include how severe their concussion was, their age, how healthy they were before the concussion, and how they take care of themselves after the injury.

Some people who have had a concussion find that at first it is hard to do their daily activities, their job, to get along with everyone at home, and even to relax.

Rest is very important after a concussion because it helps the brain to heal. Ignoring your symptoms and trying to "tough it out" often makes symptoms worse. Be patient, because healing takes time. Only when your symptoms have reduced significantly, in consultation with your health care professional, should you slowly and gradually return to your daily activities, such as work or school. If your symptoms come back or you get new symptoms as you become more active, this is a sign that you are pushing yourself too hard. Stop these activities and take more time to rest and recover. As the days go by, you can expect to gradually feel better.

Getting Better: Tips for Adults

- Get plenty of sleep and rest during the day
- Avoid activities that are physically demanding (housecleaning, weight lifting/working out) or that require a lot of concentration (balancing your check book). They can make your symptoms worse and slow your recovery.
- Avoid activities that could lead to another concussion, such as contact or recreational sports
- When your health care professional says you are well enough, return to your normal activities gradually, not all at once.
- Your ability to react may be slower after a concussion. Ask your health care professional when you can safely drive a car, ride a bike or operate heavy equipment.
- Talk to your health care professional about when you can return to work.
- Talk to your employer about returning to work gradually and limiting activities and/or schedule until you recover.

- Don't drink alcoholic beverages, as they may slow your recovery.
- Write down the things that may be harder than usual for you to remember.
- Avoid sustained computer use
- Eat well, drink lots of water and get plenty of sleep.

Getting Better: Tips for Children

Parents and caregivers of children who have had a concussion can help them recover by taking an active role in their recovery:

- Help the child to get plenty of rest, keep a regular sleep schedule, including no late nights and no sleepovers.
- Limit screen use (i.e. watching T.V., playing video games, and texting)
- Make sure the child avoids high-risk/high-speed activities, such as riding a bike, skate boarding, climbing playground equipment, contact recreational sports, or going on rides that could result in another bump, blow or jolt to the head.
- Talk with your health care professional about when the child should return to school and other activities, and how the parent or caregiver can help the child deal with the challenges they may face. For example, your child may need to spend fewer hours at school, rest often, or require more time to take tests.
- Sharing information about concussions with parents, siblings, teachers, counselors, babysitters, coaches and others who interact with the child helps them to understand what has happened and how to help meet the child's needs.

Help Prevent Long Term Problems

If you already had a medical condition at the time of your concussion (i.e. chronic headaches), it may take longer for you to recover from the concussion. Anxiety, depression, learning disabilities and bipolar disorder also make it harder to adjust to the symptoms of a concussion. While you are healing, you should be very careful to avoid doing anything that could cause a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body. On rare occasions, receiving another concussion before the brain has healed can result in brain swelling, permanent brain damage, and even death, particularly among children and teens.

For more Information:

<https://www.stpetes.org/SaveTheBrainHelena>

<http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/>

<http://biamt.org/>