

GOAL POST

Concussion Rehab

by: Meaghan Shearer Adams

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Each concussion is unique and requires an individualized management program for each athlete. While most concussions resolve spontaneously in a short period of time, some require more attention, and some athletes, regardless of speed of recovery, may require some rehab to return to their previous level of play.

Return to play must follow a medically supervised series of steps, with the athlete progressing through stages only if they are asymptomatic. The stages of returning to play are:

1. Complete *physical and cognitive rest* until symptoms resolve
2. Light aerobic exercise, no resistance training
3. Sport-specific exercise
4. Non-contact training drills
5. Full contact practice
6. Return to play once the athlete has received medical clearance

An athlete may only progress to the next level if they are asymptomatic for 24 hours at the current level.

At GRSM, our initial assessment uses standardized assessment protocols such as the ImPACT test and the SCAT-3 to identify how the disturbances in brain function caused by your concussion are affecting your athletic performance. We look at:

- Neck strength and biomechanics
- Balance and position sense
- Reflexes
- Coordination
- And other physical and neurological indicators of injury

After your assessment, we'll work with you to develop a rehab plan to ensure you maintain your fitness and sport-specific skill set as you recover, and minimize your risk of re-injury.

Treatment and prevention includes:

- Subsymptom threshold cardiovascular training
- Neck strengthening
- Balance and position sense retraining
- Sport-specific awareness and education
- Equipment review

Concussions are complex injuries and are different for each athlete. It's important to have a recovery plan specific to your needs. The team at GRSM has the experience to work with you to maximize your recovery, and we look forward to working with you to get you feeling better and staying active.

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STAFF PROFILE

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Meaghan graduated from Queen's University in 2006 with an Honours Bachelor of Life Science degree, and again in 2008 with a Masters of Physical Therapy. Since graduation, Meaghan has worked in pediatric and orthopedic settings, and acted as a physiotherapist for Skate Canada, Hockey Canada, the London Half Marathon, Thames Valley Rugby Athletics Association, and Fanshawe College Varsity Athletics. Prior to joining GRSM, Meaghan became certified as a Pilates instructor with Stott Pilates, and completed the Fowler Kennedy Sport Medicine fellowship in Sport Physiotherapy. She continues to pursue further education and certification in manual therapy, sports medicine, acupuncture, Pilates training, and physiotherapy management of concussions.

Meaghan has a special interest in concussion rehab, and has taken several courses to further her knowledge in this area. She is also working toward a PhD in Neuroscience at the University of Waterloo, studying some of the effects of concussions.

Coaches and Concussions

Coaches and Trainers play an important role in maintaining the health and safety of hockey players. If a player reports to you any concussion-like symptoms (headache, seeing stars, dizziness, etc.), you should immediately take them out of the game. Many players are not likely to report feeling the effect of a big impact. After a large collision be sure to monitor the player that was involved, and have the player seek medical attention if they have any concussion symptoms.

Resources

For more information on **Concussion Management** check out the resources below:

Grand River Sports Medicine Centre:

www.grsm.ca

ThinkFirst Canada:

www.thinkfirst.ca

Sport Concussion Assessment Tool 3:

<http://www.thinkfirst.ca/downloads/concussion/SCAT3.pdf>

Sport Concussion Assessment Tool 3 For Children:

<http://www.thinkfirst.ca/downloads/concussion/SCAT3-child.pdf>

Hockey Canada:

<http://www.hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/Hockey-Programs/Safety/Concussions.aspx>

Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport Blog:

<http://www.cces.ca/en/blog-36-brain-injuries-the-hidden-damage>

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