

Table 1. An Example of a Graduated Exertion Protocol* #

Steps	Activity	Objective
1. Rest & Recovery	Routine daily activities as tolerated.	Recovery
2. Light Aerobic Exercise	10-20 minutes on a stationary bike or treadmill with light to moderate resistance supervised by the team's athletic trainer. No resistance training or weight training. Duration and intensity of the aerobic exercise can be gradually increased over time if no symptoms or signs return during or after the exercise.	Cardiovascular challenge to determine if there are any recurrent concussion signs or symptoms.
3. Continued Aerobic Exercise and Introduction of Strength Training	With continued supervision by the athletic trainer, increase the duration and intensity of the aerobic exercise (e.g. more intense or longer time on the bike or treadmill, introduction of running and sprinting) and introduction of non-contact sport specific conditioning drills (e.g. changing direction drills, cone drills). Introduction of strength training supervised by the athletic trainer.	Progress cardiovascular exercise, add strength training and more complex movements to determine if there are any recurrent concussion signs or symptoms.
4. Football Specific Activities	Participation in all non-contact activities for the typical duration of a full practice.	Increasing football specific demands to determine if there are any recurrent concussion signs or symptoms. Add the cognitive load of playing football.
5. Full Football Activity / Clearance	Full participation in practice and contact without restriction.	Tolerance of all football activities without any recurrent concussion signs or symptoms.

*This Table serves as a guideline. Specifics will depend on each player's situation. There is no set timeline for return to play or progression through the protocol

#Adapted from the 4th International Concussion in Sport Conference. McCrory P, Meeuwisse WH, Aubry M, et al. Br J Sports Med, 2013;47:250–258.