

Traumatic Brain Injury Recovery Time

Everyone heals differently after a traumatic brain injury. Your plan of care will be individualized based on the severity of injury and symptoms you experience. Typically, you can expect that the recovery process will take four to six weeks, but it might take longer.

When a brain injury occurs, the brain is not able to make enough energy. To help the brain recover, activities that use brain energy, such as cognitive (thinking) and physical activities, are restricted and limited. Before we give you the go-ahead to participate in physical activity, you need to have:

- A normal physical exam.
- Your symptoms return to what is normal for you.
- Your cognitive scores and function be at the expected level for your age, gender and medical history.

Once you reach these goals we will start the process of allowing you to return to activity. (Not everyone will need to see a physical therapist, speech and language pathologist, or occupational therapist.)

Common Questions

Q. What are cognitive activities?

A. Cognitive activities include text messaging, video games, computer activities (other than schoolwork) and reading (other than schoolwork).

Q. What does no physical activity mean?

A. No physical activity means that both feet are on the ground (not on a bike, not jumping in the air, not going down slides) and walking only. No sports, exercise, gym or recess. No activity that increases the heart rate beyond a typically walking pace.

Q. What are the stages of returning to activity?

A. Physical activity is returned in stages. Each stage must be completed without you experiencing symptoms. You will receive more information about returning to activity when your health care provider recommends that you can begin activity.

See more details about returning to activity in the chart on the next page.

Return to Physical Activity Stages

<u>Stage</u>	<u>Target Heart Rate</u>	<u>Physical Activities</u>
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1	30-40% of maximum exertion	<p>NO: contact or impact activities; playgrounds.</p> <p>OK: recess inside with supervision, 15–20 minutes maximum; playing catch; kicking ball with adult; light yoga and stretching; bowling; golf (short drives and putting); 10–15 minutes of light cardiovascular exercise.</p>
2	40-60% of maximum exertion	<p>NO: contact activities.</p> <p>OK: kicking ball back and forth; shooting baskets; playing catch; badminton; swimming lessons; golf; Wii video games; 20–30 minutes of cardiovascular exercise.</p>
3	60-80% of maximum exertion	<p>NO: contact activities; jumping off pool diving boards; climbing on monkey bars or other playground equipment.</p> <p>OK: jump rope; swimming (lessons or leisure); ice skating with helmet; strength, conditioning and balance exercises; playground slides and swings (but no jumping off them or “underdog” pushes); baseball/softball/tennis (limited-contact sport) practice; light running and short-distance running.</p>
4	80-90% of maximum exertion	<p>NO: contact activities; sports scrimmages or games.</p> <p>OK: heavy training; practice for full-contact sports including football, basketball, volleyball, soccer and hockey; playground equipment climbing walls and monkey bars; limited-contact sports and activities.</p>
5	Full exertion	<p>OK: All levels of activity including full-contact sports practices and games.</p>

Make An Appointment [651-290-8707](tel:651-290-8707) Refer a Patient [651-325-2200](tel:651-325-2200)

This information is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care providers. If you have any questions, talk with your doctor or others on your health care team.

If you are a Gillette patient with urgent questions or concerns, please contact Telehealth Nursing at [651-229-3890](tel:651-229-3890).