

Concussion Recovery

A concussion is the most common form of brain injury. It often heals on its own, with 85 percent of concussions improved in 7-10 days. However, there are steps you can take to speed up the recovery process.

Eat healthy.

Be sure to eat plenty of good fats like olive oil, coconut oil, avocados or nuts. You should also eat plenty of vegetables and fruits and avoid processed foods. Also, don't forget to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water and avoiding soda and energy drinks. Supplements you can take to boost recovery include fish oil (DHA), turmeric and probiotics.

Get plenty of sleep.

You should get at least 8 hours of sleep every night. Make an effort to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, and avoid napping within a few hours of your bed time. Skip watching TV or using a cell phone or iPad in bed, as this will disrupt your sleep schedule. If you're struggling to fall asleep, you might want to consider taking the supplement melatonin.

Exercise regularly.

Controlled exercise has been shown to help concussion recovery. If it doesn't worsen your symptoms, you might want to try walking (outside or on a treadmill) for 10-15 minutes. When at home, walk around barefoot to improve your balance.



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Practice breathing techniques.

Diaphragmatic breathing helps with relaxation, posture and core stability. Practice this lying on your back, as shown below. Take slow, deep breaths through your nose. Focus on keeping your chest still and allowing your belly to expand when you breathe in, and contract when you breathe out. Do this for 5 minutes every day. You can also use this technique if you're having trouble sleeping.



Relieve neck pain.

Suboccipital massage: Massage your suboccipitals (the muscles where your neck meets the base of your skull) with a tennis or lacrosse ball, as shown in the picture below. This will help relieve your neck pain/stiffness and headaches.



Neck/Upper back stretch: Lie on your stomach, as shown below. Stretch your neck by looking up and down, side to side, and bringing your ear to your shoulder. Do each sequence 10 times.



If your symptoms don't improve, or if you have questions or concerns, please call one of our specialists:

Brian Mahaffey, MD
Mercy Sports Medicine
314.325.3068

Sarah Alander, MD
Children's Post Concussion
314.251.2205

To learn more about Mercy Sports Medicine, or to find a location near you, visit mercy.net/ConcussionSupport.



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