

# TALL TREE

CONCUSSION PROGRAM

## RECOVERY GUIDE



# INTRODUCTION

The Tall Tree concussion program has been grown from the ground up specifically for you. This recovery guide was designed to help you understand concussion and serve as a tool you can use along with your therapists.

## OUR GOALS ARE TO HELP YOU:

- Get back to all aspects of your life
- Better manage & resolve your symptoms
- Improve your physical, cognitive and mental health
- Better understand your injury and recovery process
- Feel happier and healthier

## KEEP IN MIND:

- Concussion affects every person differently
- Most people recover from a concussion without any lingering symptoms
- Symptoms often resolve within a few weeks or months
- Recovery is still possible even if symptoms last longer

## WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

- Concussions are head injuries that can happen when you hit or jolt your head quickly.
- Concussions are considered brain injuries
- Injury to your brain, neck, nerves, vestibular system or other parts of your head can cause symptoms
- You don't need to lose consciousness or have amnesia
- It won't show up on most CT or MRI scans
- Symptoms can be immediate but can also show up hours or days after



## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Concussions cause a wide variety of physical, cognitive and emotional symptoms, none of which are specific to the injury.

This makes it hard to decide if what you're experiencing is a direct result of a brain injury or something else.

See our Concussion Learning Hub online for a list of common symptoms: [victoriaconcussion.com/welcome](https://victoriaconcussion.com/welcome)

## WHY DO I HAVE SYMPTOMS?

- Initially, symptoms are due to injury to the brain or other parts of the body (neck, vestibular system, nerves)
- As time passes, other factors lead to symptoms too
- Sometimes it's the other factors that are the main issues
- Symptoms interact with each other (for example, lack of sleep causes fatigue and cognitive problems)

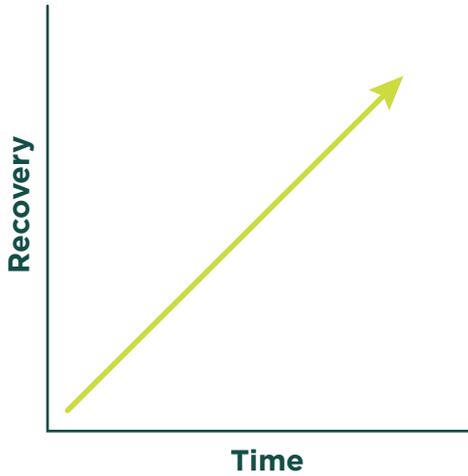
### Key Message:

Your brain injury is often not to blame for all symptoms.

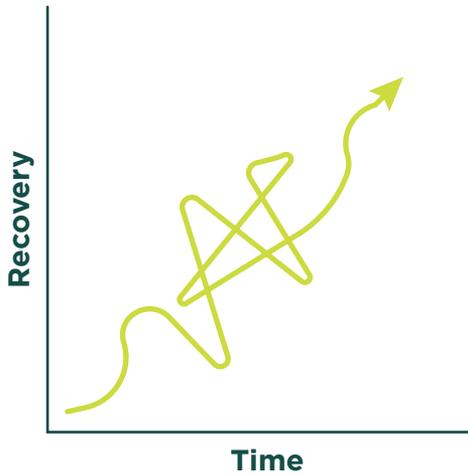


# WHEN WILL I BE BETTER?

What You Think It Will Be Like



What It Will Actually Be Like



# RECOVERY

Recovery is an active process that requires you to work hard toward goals. To begin the journey, fill out the sections below.

MY GOALS:

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THESE GOALS ARE IMPORTANT BECAUSE:

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BARRIERS/OBSTACLES:

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EXPECTATIONS THAT I HAVE:

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QUESTIONS I'D LIKE ANSWERED:

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# RETURNING TO ACTIVITY

In general the best approach to recovery is to gradually return to your normal daily activities.

## GENERAL TIPS:

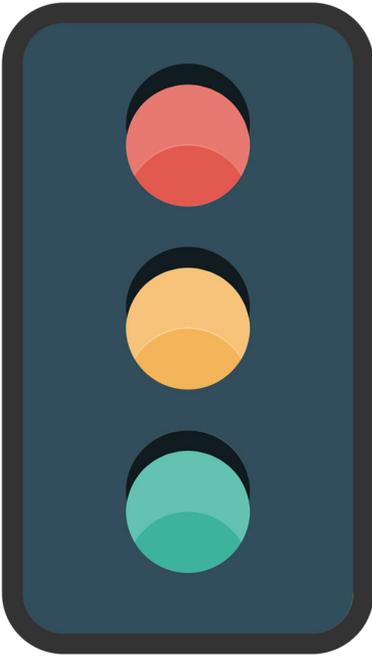
- Rest right away for the first few days after injury
- You don't need to stop all activity completely
- Start getting back to things as soon as you can tolerate
- Return to easy activities first (like stuff around the house) before progressing back to school or work
- You should not return to any risky activities where there's a chance of injury for at least 3-4 weeks (and in some cases longer).
- Returning to life activities is therapeutic and makes you better!

## FOR SPORTS, SCHOOL & WORK:

- Take a few days off
- Return gradually using a ***Return to Play, Learn or Work*** protocol (found on our website)

## HOW MUCH CAN I DO?

- Normal everyday activities **will not damage** your brain (even though you still experience symptoms).
- You need to challenge yourself to get better. This means **pushing into symptoms** but not through symptoms.
- Aim for the yellow zone, and avoid the red zone.



### RED ZONE

Symptoms flare up immediately and do not calm down for hours (or days). Have trouble coping and unable to do anything else.

### YELLOW ZONE

Symptoms increase but are tolerable and subsided within a few minutes or hours.

### GREEN ZONE

Activity did not change symptoms much, if at all. Consider doing more.

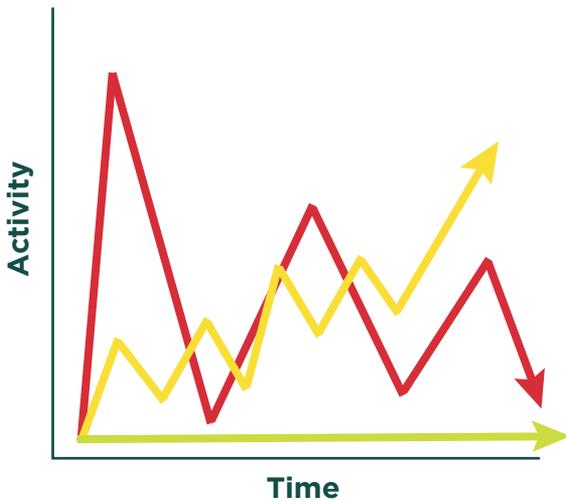
# PACING

Doing nothing, or doing too much will not help you recover.

Everything you do in a day will require energy, including: meal prep, driving, social time, shopping, work, reading, computer use and childcare.

Ask yourself everyday: how much energy do I have to spend?

***Know your limit, play within it.***



Find The Right Amount Of Symptoms

Too Little

Just Right

Too Much

## GRADED ACTIVITY

To get better, break down activity into small parts and gradually do more over time.

Every activity can be modified and made easier. Going back to things doesn't have to be all-or-nothing.

Start with easy, low intensity things for a few minutes at a time. Gradually progress to more intense or difficult things for longer periods of time.

### HOW TO DO IT:

- Choose an activity you want to get back to
- Break it down into parts
- Create a progression plan

### AN EXAMPLE:

- 1 Walking for 15 minutes
- 2 Walking for 30 minutes
- 3 Jogging for 30 minutes
- 4 Running for 30 minutes

## SLEEP

Good quality sleep can speed up recovery. Not getting enough sleep can slow things down and contribute to symptoms, especially fatigue and thinking troubles.

### DO:

- Go to bed and wake-up at the same time 7 days a week
- Get up right away with the alarm (don't use snooze)
- Nap for less than 45 minutes and early in the day
- Exercise regularly each day (20-30 minutes)
- Have a quiet, dark, and cool bedroom
- Reduce stress, or worries before bed
- Have a consistent wind-down and pre-sleep routine
- Get sunlight (or full spectrum light) during the day
- Use bed for sleep only. Rest in other places in the home

### DON'T:

- Consume caffeine, alcohol or smoke in the evening
- Use phone, tablet, TV or computer before or in bed
- Go to bed with stress or worries
- Try to force yourself to sleep
- Nap late in the day
- Use the snooze button



# STRESS

Getting a concussion and dealing with symptoms is stressful! But stress itself can be a problem and slow down recovery.

Reducing and managing stress will improve your recovery and help you feel better faster.

## DO:

- Exercise every day
- Maximize sleep and optimize rest
- Eat consistent and balanced meals
- Avoid too much caffeine or alcohol
- Plan ahead and prioritize the most important activities
- Keep a consistent routine
- Find a calm environment
- Use distractions
- Delegate and ask for help
- Have fun and do things you enjoy
- Get into nature

## TRY:

- Mindfulness or meditation
- Breathing exercises
- Progressive muscle relaxation



## EXERCISE

Gentle exercise like walking can help speed up recovery and can be started right away. Start with low intensity and gradually pick up the pace.

### DO:

- Exercise moderately for 20 minutes daily
- Stay in the yellow zone - it should feel hard but good
- Low impact, low risk exercise
- Keep an exercise log

### DON'T:

- Progress too quickly
- Get into the red zone too often
- Return to contact or high-risk activities until cleared

### TRY:

- Walking, hiking or jogging
- Stationary bike
- Yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi or Qi Gong
- Body-weight exercises
- Water exercise or swimming (if it feels good)



## DIET & NUTRITION

Eating well can help you heal and recovery more quickly.

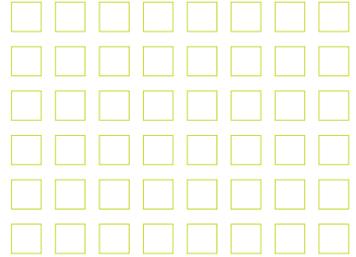
### DO:

- Eat consistently through the day
- Plan your meals
- Have a balanced, low-inflammation diet
- Eat plenty of leafy greens and vegetables
- Eat plenty of "healthy fats"
- Limit simple sugars and high-glycemic foods
- Avoid too much caffeine or alcohol
- Stay well hydrated (cup of water in AM & every 2 hours)
- Ensure you have no deficiencies

### CONSIDER SUPPLEMENTATION (WITH MEDICAL HELP)

- Omega-3 fatty acids
- Vitamins D & B
- Iron, Zinc and Magnesium
- Protein and amino acids
- Ketogenic diet (or low carbohydrate diet)

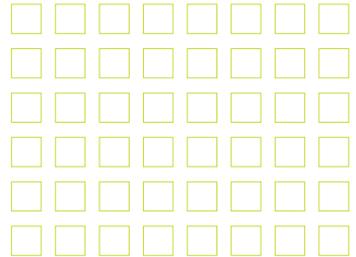




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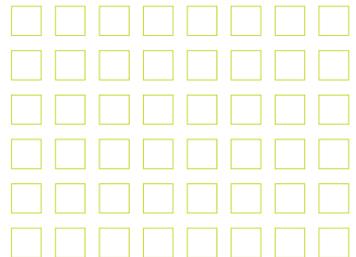
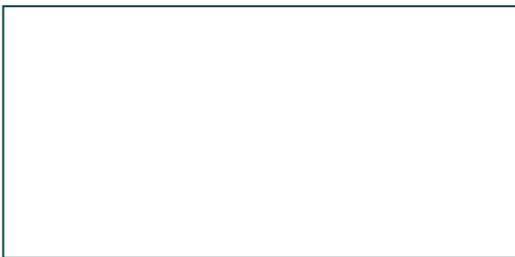
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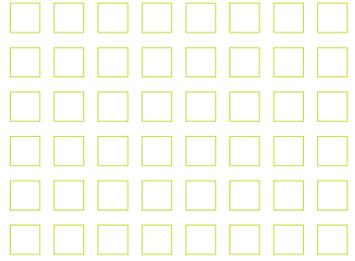
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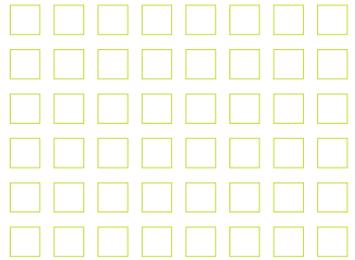
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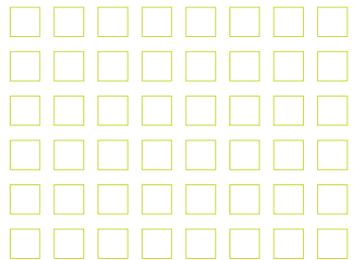
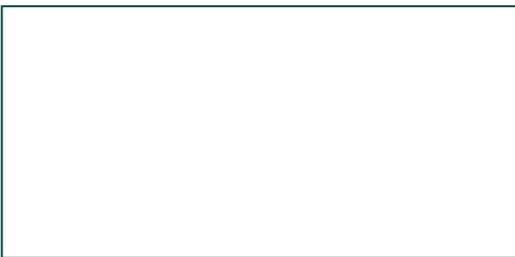
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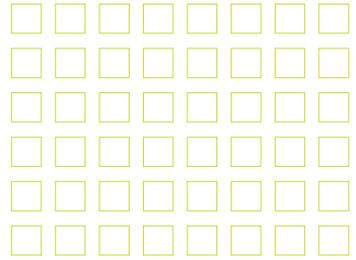
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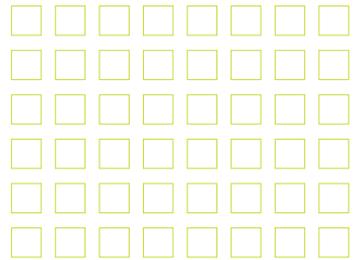
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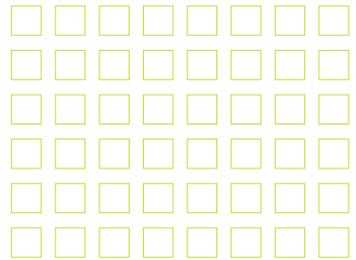
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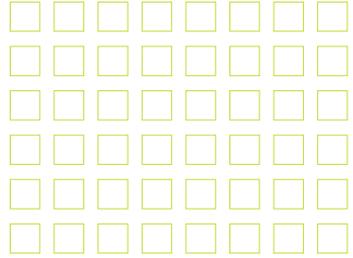
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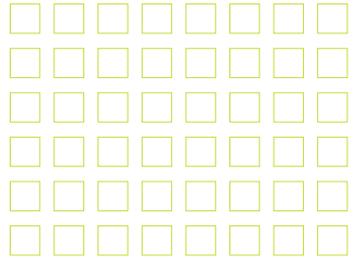
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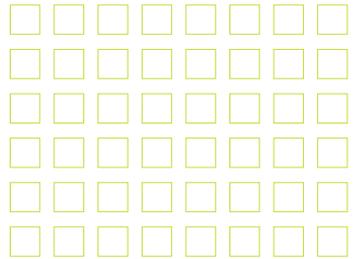
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# Advice From A Tree

**Stand tall and proud.**

**Go out on a limb.**

**Remember your roots.**

**Drink plenty of water.**

**Be content with your natural beauty.**

**Enjoy the view.**

