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**Concussion Awareness and Safe Practice**

Concussion is a temporary impairment of brain function usually caused by a blow that has shaken the brain within the skull.

Concussion can occur from numerous types of incident and can vary from one martial art to another.

Failure to assess, evaluate and manage a participant return with a concussion can have serious consequences, particularly if a player with concussion is allowed to continue to train or compete.

Signs and symptoms of a concussion may include:

* Headache or a feeling of pressure in the head
* Temporary loss of consciousness
* Confusion or feeling as if in a fog
* Amnesia surrounding the traumatic event
* Dizziness or "seeing stars"
* Ringing in the ears
* Nausea
* Vomiting
* Slurred speech
* Delayed response to questions
* Appearing dazed
* Fatigue

A participant who is thought to have sustained concussion, should follow this procedure:

* They must stop training or competing with immediate effect.
* If medical support or First Aid is on site, they should be assessed immediately.
* The participant must be continually observed to assess heath.
* The participant must be taken to hospital as soon as possible. If it is deemed unsafe by car, call an ambulance.
* The participants, parent, carer or emergency contact should be called as soon as possible.
* The participant must reframe from any physical activity for a minimum of 7 days.
* The participants must be re-assessed by a medical professional before training or competing again.
* It is essential that a gradual return to activity is undertaken, ideally over a 4-week period.

The following gives you guidance on the stages of rehabilitation

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| Stage | Action | Exercise |
| 1 | Rest | Minimum of 7 days |
| 2 | Light Aerobic Exercise | This can be walking, swimming, stationary cycling at an intensity of less than 70% max heart rate |
| 3 | Drills or activities specific to the sport | Running drills, changing of direction, NO contact with other participants or drills that may impact the head |
| 4 | Contact training | More complex drills can be completed, including training with other participants. Reframe from contact with the head |
| 5 | Full Training | Normal training activities can be undertaken |
| 6 | Full Return | Full training and competition can be undertaken |

Additional guidance can be found on the National Institute for Heath and Care Excellence: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg176/ifp/chapter/head-injuries>