

IHRB

Irish Horseracing
Regulatory Board



RETURN TO RIDING PROTOCOL FOLLOWING CONCUSSION FOR JOCKEYS

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Concussion is an injury to the brain which results in a disturbance of brain function. It can be caused by a direct or indirect impact to the head or body.

Common concussion symptoms include:

- headache,
- dizziness,
- memory disturbance or
- balance problems.

Loss of consciousness occurs in less than 10% of concussions and is not a requirement in diagnosing a concussion.

These guidelines reflect latest medical advice from the 6th International Consensus Conference on Concussion in Sport, adapted for the sport of horseracing.

Recognise and remove remains a key message to ensure concussion is diagnosed and a jockey does not continue to ride, that day or until recovered and with medical clearance. Early medical assessment and early light physical and mental activity can help treat the symptoms of concussion and prevent persisting symptoms.

Concussion needs to be taken seriously, including those cases sustained while riding out, to ensure full recovery and health and wellbeing of jockeys.

Rehabilitation Stages



Only Move to the next stage if you are symptom free at the end of the current stage

0

Initial rest period and reduced screen time

Rest with light daily activities around the house only. Short walks, light chores.

No riding out, yard work, exercise, or training/sports.

Limit activities such as school, work and screen time. Move to stage 1 once symptom free or at least only mild, short lived worsening of symptoms.



1

Normal daily activities

Normal activities around the house. Gentle walking, stationary cycling, reading, using phone.

Visit yard for social purposes – **No riding out**

Move to Stage 2 once symptom free or at least only mild, short lived worsening of symptoms with these activities. Normal activities around the house.



2

Light aerobic structured exercise

Low-moderate intensity activity, e.g.,
stationary cycling or jogging, gym exercises
(no added weights)

20-30 mins at a time. **No riding out**

Light yard duties only, no contact with horse.

Office / school or study work

Move to stage 3 once remaining symptom
free or at least only mild, short lived
worsening of symptoms with these activities.



3

Increase Aerobic exercise and balance rehabilitation

Build up intensity of exercise, allowing HR to
increase.

E.g., stationary cycling, running, horse
simulator, gym work with weights, yard duties
on the ground.

Commence balance exercises as per video
tutorial.

No riding out

Move to stage 4 only once remaining
symptom free or at least only mild, short
lived worsening of symptoms with these
activities.



4

Return to normal activities including work or school/college

Return to normal exercise levels.
Return to regular workplace in yard or school / college.
Horse simulator encouraged as sport specific.

No riding out

Move to Stage 5 once remaining symptom free and post-concussion assessment complete and clearance from IHRB Chief Medical Officer



POST-CONCUSSION ASSESSMENT TO BE COMPLETED FIRST.

5

Normal riding out duties

Riding out, riding work and schooling, as normal.

48hour declarations can be made in anticipation of passing the post-concussion assessment.



6

Return to race riding

Return to race riding pending passing of the post-concussion assessment and clearance by IHRB Senior Medical Officer.



What to do when I get a concussion?

- 1) Do not ride out
- 2) Do not drive for the first 24 hours and until cleared by a healthcare professional.
- 3) Do not return to play/sport or any activity that may cause another head injury until clearance by a healthcare professional
- 4) Avoid alcohol
- 5) Avoid prescription or non-prescription drugs without medical supervision. Specifically avoid sleeping tablets
- 6) Stay with a responsible adult and within reach of a phone
- 7) Limit screen time for the first 48 hours

Common Symptoms:

(Once not getting worse it can be normal to feel mild symptoms which may come and go)

Headache
Pressure in Head
Neck pain
Nausea or vomiting
Sensitivity to light/noise
Dizziness/Balance problems
Feeling slowed down
Feeling in a fog
Don't feel right

Difficulty concentrating
Difficulty remembering
Fatigue / Low energy
Confusion
Drowsiness
More emotional
Irritability
Sadness
Nervous or anxious

when to seek help?

- 1) Any change in behaviour
- 2) Vomiting
- 3) Worsening headache
- 4) Double vision
- 5) Excessive drowsiness
- 6) Weakness or pins and needles in your arms or legs
- 7) Worsening of any symptoms or if symptoms failing to settle

Baseline Concussion Test

All jockeys / riders will have baseline testing every two years.

Flat jockeys working abroad for the Winter/Spring will be required to have completed testing within 2 weeks of their return.

This will take place at one of three regional centres. These centres will be located in private (independent) clinics or GP surgeries and trained nurses at each location will carry out the NP testing on behalf of the IHRB.

Each jockey/rider will be required to

- complete a computerised Neuro-psychological (NP) test (Cogstate) - <http://cogstate.com>
 - a series of pen and paper tests (SCOLP, Digit Span, SDMT:Symbol Digit Modalities Test, Colour Trails, STROOP)
 - GAD7 and PHQ9 Questionnaires
- the whole process will take about 60 minutes to complete.

The various tests will then be evaluated by one of a team of Clinical Neuropsychologists retained by the IHRB

IHRB Approved Concussion Centres

Mallow, Co. Cork

**Mallow – Red House Family Practice, Mallow Primary
Health Care Centre, Mallow Business Park, Mallow, Co Cork
P51 PE00.**

Tel :- 022 – 21478

Contact email if necessary: redhouse@mphc.ie

Naas, Co. Kildare

**Naas - Vista Primary Care Centre, Ballymore Eustace Road,
Naas, Co Kildare**

Tel:- 045 – 848701 / 086 0282977

Contact Persons if necessary: Maria Lloyd

Santry, Co. Dublin

**Santry - Sports Surgery Clinic, Unit 10 Gulliver's Retail Park,
Northwood, Santry, Dublin 9**

Tel:- 01 - 5262030

Contact email if necessary: SportsMedicineSSC@upmc.ie

Belfast, Northern Ireland

**Sports Medicine NI, Unit 3, 40 Montgomery Road, Belfast
BT6 9HL**

Tel:- 028 90190290

Contact email if necessary: info@sportsmedicineni.com