

# Playing Smart

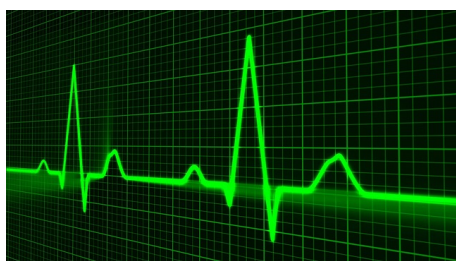
By Rachel Allen

When participating in exercise, it is important to exercise with safety in mind. A very real threat to exercise, especially when engaging in contact sports, is the danger of concussion. A concussion, as defined as “a stunning, damaging, or shattering effect from a hard blow” (“Concussion”, n.d.). Concussions are painful, and can have long term effects.



One of those long-term effects is feeling all the signs of a concussion for much longer than a few weeks. This is called post-concussive syndrome, and 5 – 15% of those who suffer from a concussion can develop Post-Concussion Symptoms (Morgan, C. D. et al, 2016), and can keep a young person out of the sport they love. Scientists are trying to find out if there is a way to tell in advance if someone is going to get post concussive disorder or if they’ll heal up at a normal rate. This group of researchers got information about 40 kids that all got PCS.

What these researchers found was that if you have had a concussion before, if you or a family member struggle with mood disorders, or if the signs of a concussion after being hit take a while to set in, you are more likely to develop PCS. Although the above information is important to communicate with your doctor, especially if you have experienced a head injury, and you suspect that you have a concussion, it’s also important to know how your normally function, or what your ‘baseline’ is. Many symptoms of concussions are difficult to identify, but with



a baseline of information, you can measure your progress of healing and that will give you a good indicator at how soon you can return to exercise (Greenburg, Mark S., Ph.D., et al, 2015). You can get your baseline by testing your balance, mental acuity, and general disposition – all of which are subject to change from the effects of a concussion.

Visit our the “[Opportunities](#)” link to find where you can get information on how to build a baseline of your own.