



## Mental Fatigue Strategies

Mental fatigue is the most common underlying reason for concussion symptoms. Headache is the most common symptom of a concussion and often the first “indicator” of inefficient energy management.

When a student with a concussion goes back to school within days to weeks, their ability to “manage their symptoms” becomes the crucial skill needed to determine:

- ▣ If they feel symptomatically well enough to physically be at school (Return to School)
- ▣ If they feel symptomatically well enough to be available, cognitively, for learning (Return to Learn)

**Symptom Management**  
is the #1 priority,  
especially in the beginning weeks of  
concussion management!  
It is acceptable to be at school with  
“annoying” symptoms!

### Strategies: Rest breaks:

- “Pacing” - Eyes closed/head down/water breaks 5 to 10 minutes, in the classroom, after periods of mental exertion
  - Take eyes off the computer or off the book and look across the room or close eyes for rest
  - Take more water breaks – allow for more generous bathroom breaks if water is increased.
  - Take a 5 minute “bean bag” or “head on desk” rest break in the classroom once an hour if needed.
- “Strategic Rest Breaks” – 15 to 20 minute proactive rest breaks in the clinic (perhaps in place of PE class, recess, orchestra) 1X in the am and 1X in the pm. The goal is to “schedule” a rest break at a logical time of the morning or afternoon to prevent the build up of symptoms. Be proactive instead of reactive.
- Only after being physically and cognitively present for ***instruction*** can a general education teacher fairly assess the REMOVAL of non-essential work and REDUCTION of semi-essential work.