



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)

The MOST effective academic intervention for a student with a concussion is REMOVAL of non-essential work and REDUCTION of semi-essential work. These “gifts” from **YOU**, the general education teacher, cannot be given if the student has not been physically or cognitively present IN CLASS long enough or frequently enough to hear instruction. Therefore, the ability to manage symptoms, with the goal of feeling comfortable enough to be physically and cognitively present for classroom instruction, is the KEY to a successful RTL plan.

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.

