

# Return to the Dojo Guidelines

## After a Concussion

### What Is a Concussion?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury, or TBI, caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. This fast movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging the brain cells. Aikido practice represents a low risk of incurring a concussion, however, no physical activity is without potential risk of a head trauma

### RETURN TO THE DOJO PROTOCOL

These guidelines are meant to act as a suggestion for participants after they suffer a concussion. The length of each phase varies depending on the severity of the concussion and should be decided based on **consultation with a health care professional**. Variables include past medical history, age, weight, severity of symptoms, return of symptoms, etc... There is no exact return to the mat time line, however, it may vary from one-week to not being able to be on the mat again.

#### PHASE 1: Rest Period

Participant should be remove themselves from practice at the dojo and **be evaluated by a health care professional**. A concussed participant needs to get plenty of rest. They should refrain from all physical and brain intense activity, including text messaging and video games. Depending on the severity, participants may need to stay home.

Participants should continue to the next phase only if all the signs and symptoms of a concussion are gone. **Please consult an informed health care professional if the signs and symptoms continue throughout the Return to the Dojo Protocol.**

#### PHASE 2: Light Exercise

If the participant does not have any symptoms, begin light aerobic exercise (5-10 min) that does not drastically increase heart rate. Walk, light jog and stationary bike are suggested. No weights, jumping, or skating. Add activity that increases heart rate & limited body and head movement. May return to limited workload and routines. Should not return to the Dojo yet.

#### PHASE 3: Dojo Specific Exercise

If the participant has been evaluated by an informed health care professional, the participant may resume light training at the dojo, but not participate more rigorous portions of class, such as breakfall techniques, paired weapons practice, jyu-waza, or randori. May return more normal level of activity in daily routine, but avoid excessive screen time (tv, computer, phone, tablet).

#### PHASE 4: Non-Contact Training Drills

Begin heavy non-contact physical activity, such as running, stationary bike, and resistance training outside of the dojo. Participant is allowed back on the mat for full practice, but should abstain from harder ukemi/falling, such as breakfalls, and "feather fall" practice. Continue to increase regular daily routines.

#### PHASE 5: Full Practice

Reintegrate back into full practice.

# Concussion Fact Sheet for Adult Participants and Parents/Guardians of Minors

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## How Can I Help Keep Myself, or my Children/Teen Safe?

Martial Arts are a great way for everyone to stay healthy and can help them do well their daily lives. To help lower a participant's chances of getting a concussion or other serious brain injury, they should:

- Help create a culture of safety in the dojo.
- Work with their sensei(s) to teach ways to lower the chances of getting a concussion.
- Emphasize the importance of reporting concussions and taking time to recover from one.
- Ensure that they follow the rules of the dojo for safety.
- Parents tell your children or teens that you expect them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.

## How Can I Spot a Possible Concussion?

Participants who show or report one or more of the signs and symptoms listed below, or simply say they just "don't feel right" after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body may have a concussion or other serious brain injury.

### Signs Observed by Parents

- Appears dazed or stunned.
- Forgets an instruction, is confused about an assignment or position, or is unsure of the game, score, or opponent.
- Moves clumsily.
- Answers questions slowly.
- Loses consciousness (even briefly).
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes.
- Can't recall events prior to or after a hit or fall.

### Symptoms Reported by Participants

- Headache or "pressure" in head.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Balance problems or dizziness, or double or blurry vision.
- Bothered by light or noise.
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy.
- Confusion, or concentration or memory problems.
- Just not "feeling right," or "feeling down."

### More Serious Symptoms to Look Out For?

In rare cases, a dangerous collection of blood (hematoma) may form on the brain after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body and can squeeze the brain against the skull. Call 9-1-1 or be driven to the emergency department right away if, after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body, the participant has one or more of these danger signs:

- One pupil larger than the other.
- Drowsiness or inability to wake up.
- A headache that gets worse and does not go away.
- Slurred speech, weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination.
- Repeated vomiting or nausea, convulsions or seizures (shaking or twitching).
- Unusual behavior, increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation.
- Loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out). Even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously.