

## **RETURN-TO-ATHLETICS (RTA) PATIENT HANDOUT**

### Phase 1 – No Activity

### **Phase 2 – Light aerobic activity**

Use either a stationary bike, treadmill, jogging or an elliptical in an environment that is not visually stimulating. Do not do any resistance training. Make sure you only exercise if you have no symptoms OR if your healthcare provider told you specifically that it would be okay to exercise with some mild symptoms. Make sure you have your Activity Journal, a stopwatch and the Post-Concussion Symptom Scale/Inventory with you.

1. Set your stopwatch for 20 minutes.
2. Exercise at 50% of your MHR (maximum heart rate). Your MHR= 220 - your age.  
  
e.g., Say you are 20 years-old, your MHR would be  $220 - (20) = 200$ . So, 50% of your MHR would be  $0.5 \times 200 = 100$ .
3. Stop exercising if you feel any increase in any symptom:
  - a. Document the time you stopped
  - b. Your heart rate at that time
  - c. Which symptoms caused you to stop and their severity (0= no symptoms, 10 = the worse symptoms imaginable)
  - d. How long it took for those symptoms to settle down to the way they were before you started exercising.
4. Stop exercising after 20 minutes (assuming you did not have to stop earlier because of troublesome symptoms).
  - a. Document the time you stopped
  - b. Your heart rate at that time
  - c. Document any symptoms you experience in the 24 hour period after your exercise session, their intensity, and how long they lasted.
5. If there is no problem with this 20-minute exercise session (that is, you had no increase in your symptoms during or after the exercise) then you may increase the intensity of your 20-minute exercise session the following 1-2 weeks by 5-10 bpm (beats per minute) and follow the same procedure (items 1-4 above). As you can see, there flexibility in how fast you progress your regimen. The more confident you feel and the smoother your trajectory has been, the quicker you can advance your regimen.
6. Every time you exercise (20 minutes session on treadmill, stationary bike, elliptical or jogging) without aggravating any of your symptoms, you may increase your heart rate by 10% on the next day's exercise session, up to a maximum of 80% of your maximum heart rate. Be sure to document everything (items 3/4 above) in your Activity Journal.