

RETURN TO SCHOOL/WORK ACCOMMODATIONS

It is crucial for the well-being of all athletes to ensure that the sports medicine team is all-inclusive. Discussions continue to focus on creating and working in a multidisciplinary team for assessment, management, and return to participation; however, it is most important when returning an athlete to academics and work. Clinicians have utilized psychologists, counselors, and administrators and have provided additional access to support structures that are not always available to health care professionals. As the support of a concussed athlete does not stop when he or she leaves the athletic venue, team members must consider how the injury affects every aspect of the athlete's life. This includes social support, academic support, and employment support. This chapter will focus on support structures that clinicians can use when helping patients transition back to school or work.

As health care providers, clinicians traditionally work within systems as a link in communication to provide the most support for the patient. When discussing transitioning back into academics, the relationship between health care providers and the school district can modify the trust, support, and eventually the willingness to cooperate with any accommodations the student may need. When returning to school, this relationship must include the athlete's teachers, administrators, counselors, nurses, and psychologists.

It is imperative to work with the school district and employer to establish a return to work and/or school plan that incorporates feedback from all parties involved. Communication is enhanced when the school and work administration can provide equal input into the return to participation and/or academics protocol. Every stake holder should have some buy in for developing a reintegration plan that works for everyone. A cooperative and collaborative approach to identify and implement appropriate accommodations for those recovering from concussions is crucial to a successful recovery. Compliance with return to work and school guidelines will be improved if the administrators are aware of the limitations and work to provide appropriate accommodations so health care is continuous and complete.