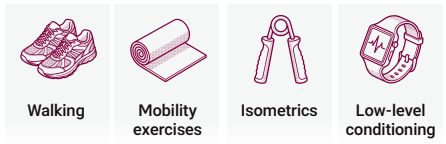
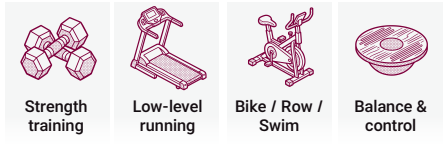
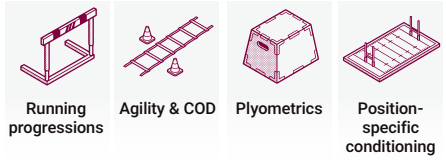
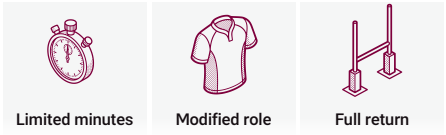
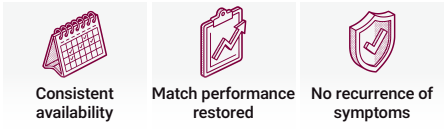
RETURN TO PLAY FRAMEWORK

A GENERAL 6-PHASE PROTOCOL FOR ANY INJURY

PHASE	OBJECTIVE	CRITERIA TO PROGRESS	EXAMPLES
01 RECOVER	Protect healing tissue Reduce pain and swelling Restore basic movement	☑ Pain controlled (<2/10) ☑ Minimal swelling ☑ Activities of daily living completed comfortably ☑ Cleared to commence loading by medical staff N.B. Concussion is a separate protocol	
02 RESTORE	Regain movement quality Rebuild strength and stability Reintroduce aerobic conditioning	☑ Full or near-full ROM ☑ Basic strength restored ☑ Able to tolerate moderate training load ☑ No increase in symptoms 24 hours post-session	
03 RECONDITION	Prepare athlete for sport demands Increase speed, power and fitness Introduce movement variability and decision making	☑ ≥80–90% pre-injury strength ☑ Pass functional testing ☑ Complete high-speed movement without symptoms ☑ Psychological confidence improving ☑ Progressive contact prep introduced where appropriate	
04 RETURN TO TRAINING	Reintegrate into team environment Build training tolerance Expose athlete to sport-specific activities	☑ Complete full training week ☑ No symptom aggravation ☑ Coach, physio and athlete confident ☑ Controlled contact drills completed where appropriate	
05 RETURN TO COMPETITION	Return to match play	☑ Medical clearance ☑ Physical testing complete ☑ Training loads comparable to teammates ☑ Athlete reports confidence and readiness	RETURN OPTIONS 
06 RETURN TO PERFORMANCE	Achieve pre-injury or better performance levels	☑ Ongoing monitoring ☑ Top-up strength work ☑ Load management ☑ Injury prevention strategies	SUCCESS MEASURES 

UNIVERSAL RTP EXIT CRITERIA

An athlete should ideally demonstrate:

- ☑ Pain-free function
- ☑ Full or acceptable ROM
- ☑ Strength ≥90–95% of baseline or contralateral limb
- ☑ Passed functional testing
- ☑ Completed sport-specific conditioning
- ☑ Completed full team training
- ☑ Psychologically ready to return
- ☑ Medical clearance obtained

TRAFFIC LIGHT SYSTEM

GREEN
Symptom free
Progress next session

AMBER
Mild increase in symptoms
Repeat current stage

RED
Significant symptoms / swelling / pain
Regress one stage and reassess

KEY PRINCIPLES

Progress gradually
Increase load and intensity step-by-step

Athlete-centred
Tailor to the individual, not just the injury

Monitor & adapt
Listen to the athlete and adjust the plan as needed

Collaborate
Physio, coach, S&C and medical team aligned

If symptoms increase at any stage, hold or regress to the previous stage and reassess.

PATIENT. PROGRESSIVE. PURPOSEFUL.

QRL SUPPORTING INFORMATION
For more information and supporting resources, visit www.qrl.com.au