

Concussion:

BASELINE TESTING



Parachute
Concussion Series

What is baseline testing?

Baseline testing is the practice of having an athlete complete certain concussion assessment tools before sport participation - usually before the start of a season - in order to get baseline or “pre-injury” measurements. In the event of a suspected concussion, assessment is done again and these post-injury measurements are compared to the baseline measurements. The goal of this testing is to identify cognitive differences in the athlete before and after the injury. Baseline testing does not refer to one specific tool or test, but can refer to many forms of assessment, such as computerized, pencil-and-paper, and sport-specific skill testing.

Should I have my child, players or students undergo baseline testing?

This is a common question and here are the key messages parents, sport organizations, and educators should know about baseline testing and concussion:

- 1. Baseline testing is not required for post-injury care of youth athletes with suspected or diagnosed concussion and mandatory testing is not recommended.**
- 2. Recognize and remove.** Rather than using resources for baseline testing, sport organizations are encouraged to develop processes within their organizations to “recognize and remove” an athlete when a suspected concussion has occurred.
- 3. Appropriate medical assessment, management, and return to sport are key.** Concussion management and return-to-sport decisions are inter-disciplinary and should be made on an individualized basis, not by using any one specific test or group of tests. It is important that an individual with a suspected concussion be seen by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner with experience in concussion management for appropriate care as soon as possible following injury.

Where can I get more information?

- Parachute’s *Statement on Concussion Baseline Testing in Canada* provides recommendations on concussion baseline testing for athletes. The full statement is available here: parachutecanada.org/concussion.
- The *Canadian Guideline on Concussion in Sport* offers recommendations and tools for concussion prevention, recognition, and management. Visit parachutecanada.org/guideline.

Sources: McCrory, P., et al. (2017). Consensus statement on concussion in sport—the 5th international conference on concussion in sport held in Berlin, October 2016. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 51(11), 838-847; Parachute. (2018). *Statement on Concussion Baseline Testing in Canada*. Toronto: Parachute.



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