

Social Life



EDUCATION

Engaging in social activities in healthy ways after concussion is important for your recovery. Avoiding activities that you enjoy can lead to isolation, changes in mood, and can even slow improvement of your symptoms. The trick is to find the right balance and activities that work for you - and not against your recovery. Be sure to follow advice of your healthcare providers when making decisions about social activities.



Don't avoid social situations, modify them instead. It can take time to learn what is the right level of stimulation for you and how not to overdo it.

Start small. Get together with a few friends at your house first instead of going to a party. Sit outside at your favorite restaurant during a non-busy time. These small changes can make a big difference in how you are able to manage your symptoms.

Think about what you are doing and where you are going before the event. Consider things like the location, travel times, and what other activities you have planned for the day. Know what to do if your symptoms become exacerbated and have an exit plan.

Schedule strategically. Plan activities for times when you feel your best and your symptoms are more easily managed. Have brunch with a friend instead of going out to dinner if you feel best in the morning.

Adjust in the moment. Monitor your symptoms to know signs that can tell you when a break is needed. Look for things like shifts to your body sensations, behavior, and thoughts for clues, and then make necessary adjustments.

Ask someone to talk outside when you are in a crowded indoor area if you start to feel changes to body sensations, like an increase in muscle tension or the start of a headache. Quick changes like this can prolong your participation in social activities.



STRATEGIES

Avoid alcohol. There is no recommended safe amount of alcohol after a concussion - especially in the initial time after your concussion when your brain is healing. Your body is also more sensitive to alcohol right after your injury. Alcohol can interact with prescribed medications by either lessening or increasing the effects of certain drugs.

Talk to your doctor about when is a safe time for you to resume drinking.

Advocate for your needs and choices with family and friends. Let them know how you are feeling and what you need to do to manage your symptoms. They may not know unless you tell them.

Remind yourself that you will get better and changes to your normal social activities are temporary. Making safe and healthy decisions now will improve your recovery.

It can be helpful to have a "buddy" when you do go out. That person can help you exit and get home or to a quiet space if need be.



TECHNOLOGY

- Use features on navigation apps like **Google Maps** to plan ahead by checking to see when a place you want to visit is less crowded:

<https://www.howtogeek.com/668798/how-to-see-how-busy-a-store-is-right-now-with-google-maps/>

