

Baseline testing for concussions: Five facts you need to know

Concussions can produce a wide variety of symptoms, which pose a challenge for coaches, trainers, parents, and healthcare professionals involved in the care of an injured athlete. Baseline testing gives you data to compare with if the athlete sustains a concussion. If the athlete has any positive results in baseline testing they will be referred to the appropriate medical practitioner for concussion management.

1 Why should I get a baseline test for concussion?

Research has shown that comparing a post-concussion athlete to their own “normal” test results is more precise in determining impairment than comparing to age matched normative data. Baseline testing gives you a much clearer picture of the impairment involved with each concussed athlete, as well as how they progress through recovery.

2 How often does an athlete need to be tested?

It is recommended to test athletes once per year, usually before their competitive season begins.

3 How long does it take to recover from a concussion?

Approximately 80% of concussed athletes recover in 8-10 days. Some individuals take longer to recover and require further testing and management.

4 How long does it take to run an individual through the baseline test?

The baseline testing of an individual takes approximately 1.5 hours to complete.

5 What does a comprehensive baseline screen include?

- Thorough concussion specific medical history questionnaire
- Age specific SCAT 3 concussion test
- Balance baseline testing using a sway platform
- Reaction time testing
- Cognigram computerized cognitive function testing
- Cervical spine range-of-motion and “position awareness” testing
- Vision screening (King Devick Test, near point of convergence, and eye movement baselines)

If you have more questions about baseline concussion testing, be sure to ask ePACT or Fortius on Twitter at [@ePACTnetwork](https://twitter.com/ePACTnetwork) or [@FortiusCentre](https://twitter.com/FortiusCentre). For more information on concussions, visit blog.fortiussport.com.

Looking for more great resources from ePACT and ViaSport? Check out our toolkits at viasport.ca/epact-toolkit