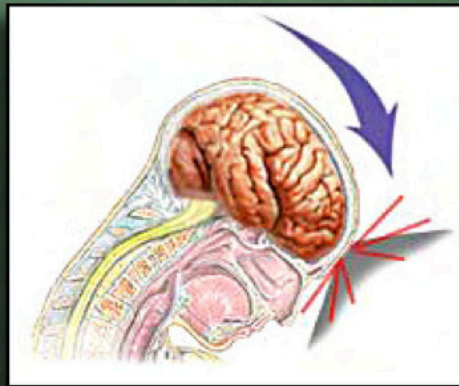


Concussion = Brain Injury



## TIP SHEET

# Home Learning During the Pandemic for Students with Concussion

Created by G. F. Strong School Program (VSB)  
Adolescent and Young Adult Program, G. F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre

## About this Resource

Students in BC are starting a new chapter in education due to the current provincial health crisis. Although students will be presented with a variety of options and activities to continue their learning over the next several weeks, many will be asked to utilize technology as a tool for engaging in these learning opportunities. This may pose a significant challenge to those students recovering from concussion. This resource has been developed to support those students who are participating in home learning opportunities during the pandemic.

## Table of Contents

### Considerations for learning from home (pg.2):

- [Set up a workspace](#)
- [Create a daily schedule](#)
- [Chunk assignments](#)
- [Get started](#)

### Managing common concussion symptoms:

- [Physical symptoms](#) (pg.3)
- [Cognitive symptoms](#) (pg.4)
- [Emotional symptoms](#) (pg.5)

## Considerations for learning from home:

### Set up a Workspace

- choose a well-lit location with minimal distractions
- use a simple, flat surface, like a table or desk
- have an outlet nearby for charging your laptop/device
- have all your materials within reach (binder, textbook, notebook, pencils)
- separate from where your sibling may be doing work (or stagger your schedules so you are not a distraction to each other)

### Chunk Assignments

- break up assignments into smaller, more manageable tasks that are easy to complete\*

Example:

1. gather materials
2. review instructions and highlight key words
3. make a list of tasks you will need to complete (e.g. read text, take notes, create outline, write draft)
4. create a timeline for each task based on due date

\* chunk work into as many small tasks as necessary

### Create a Daily Schedule

- plan a 'to-do' list (1-2 hrs per day)
- keep the same hours every day
- let your family know when you need quiet and uninterrupted time to work
- build in breaks\*
- incorporate movement into your break (eg. go for a walk around the block, get a drink of water, do jumping jacks)

\*avoid going on your phone or staying on the computer

### Get Started

- get started by completing the first task on your list
- if the first task feels too big to accomplish easily, break it up into smaller chunks
- identify a reward to motivate you to complete the task, such as taking a break or phoning a friend
- remove all distractions (e.g. turn off the TV, switch your phone to silent)
- if you're still having trouble getting started, determine what is getting in the way and ask for help

## Managing common concussion symptoms:

### Common Concussion Symptoms

#### Physical

- Headaches
- Feelings of dizziness
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Sleep disturbance
- Fatigue, tiring more easily
- Noise and/or light sensitivity
- Blurred and/or double vision

### Students May Experience

- Increased headaches and exacerbation of physical symptoms due to increased reliance on screens for participation in learning opportunities and for maintaining social connectivity
- Increased sensitivity to light due to increased use of technology
- Difficulty reading online text due to visual changes resulting from concussion
- Increased dizziness and/or nausea due to screen movement/scrolling for information online
- Postural difficulties resulting from increased screen time requirements, and reduced physical activity
- Neck pain resulting from poor ergonomics

### Strategies for Managing Symptoms

- Choose a quiet workspace with good lighting
- Sit away from bright windows
- Dim screen brightness as needed
- Use blue light filtering glasses and/or a [night screen program](#)
- Use devices with large screens and/or increase text size to reduce eye strain
- Use text-to-speech tools, including [audiobook](#) formats and [immersive reader](#)
- Frequent eye breaks (consider looking at something in the distance to relax eye muscles)
- Limit exposure to screens throughout the day
- Use [clock/timer apps](#) to time screen use and breaks
- Schedule longer brain breaks from screens throughout the day
- Use noise cancelling headphones when completing school work at home, if there are other siblings/parents working in the same room
- Work on a flat surface, rest feet on floor and sit with shoulders back
- Stay hydrated and eat regularly

## Managing common concussion symptoms:

### Common Concussion Symptoms

#### Cognitive

- Poor concentration
- Forgetfulness, poor memory
- Taking longer to think

### Students May Experience

- Difficulty understanding instructions due to text heavy nature of online instruction/coursework
- Increased cognitive fatigue due to sustained demand on visual attention required for online work
- Difficulty recognizing, encoding, and recalling visual information provided by the current online format
- Difficulty maintaining attention due to increased need for visual scanning
- Difficulty planning and managing time due to lack of structure and routine

### Strategies for Managing Symptoms

- Prioritize essential school work and request a decrease in work load or adjustment to academic expectations
- Create a daily and weekly checklist of to-dos to break down large tasks and to alleviate difficulty keeping up during online learning
- Work on one task at a time
- Take frequent brain breaks and movement breaks
- Schedule a reasonable length of time for school each day and break that time up into chunks based on symptom tolerance and to avoid exacerbation of concussion symptoms
- Use of speech-to-text tools
- Use visual reminders such as a [daily schedule](#), calendar, checklists, sticky notes
- Use visual cues such as highlighting, colour coding, pictures, diagrams
- Use memory strategies such as [chunking](#), [associations](#), [categorizing](#), [mnemonics](#)
- Use concept mapping tools such as [Popplet](#), to organize thoughts and support task initiation
- Try multisensory learning (e.g. read out loud, draw diagrams, or link learning to music)
- Communicate questions, challenges and concerns to your teacher
- Request extended time and deadlines for lengthier course assignments
- Record online sessions if platform allows, to review content/lesson as needed
- Access school-based tutoring and/or tutorial times for additional support
- Access online tutoring support, as needed
- Access course office hours for additional learning support

## Managing common concussion symptoms:

### Common Concussion Symptoms

#### Emotional

- Feeling irritable, easily angered
- Feeling depressed or tearful
- Feeling frustrated or impatient
- Restlessness

### Students May Experience

- Changes in mood, anxiety, and depression following concussion
- Exacerbated mood due to difficulties with at-home/online learning, increasing fears related to the pandemic, social isolation, and reduced physical activity levels
- Difficulty initiating tasks and completing self-directed school work due to decreased motivation
- Difficulty engaging in school related tasks independently
- Nervousness, restlessness, feelings of worry
- Rapid heart rate or breathing with increased emotions
- Feelings of frustration or anger
- Tearfulness, hopelessness
- Difficulty sleeping
- Loss of interest
- Loss of motivation
- Loss of appetite

### Strategies for Managing Symptoms

- Stick to a daily schedule, including consistent sleep/wake times (consider omitting naps during the day)
- Make a plan for staying in contact with friends
- Participate in safe, physical activity/exercises every day
- Set appropriate school goals
- Be kind to yourself, avoid triggers and reduce stress
- Express your feelings to family, friends or teacher(s)
- Access school counsellor for emotional support as needed
- Consult [online supports](#) as needed