

# **RETURN TO WORK GUIDANCE FOR INJURED JOCKEYS**

## **CONTENTS**

### **1) INTRODUCTION**

### **2) HEAD INJURIES**

### **3) SOFT TISSUE INJURIES**

- i) Haematomas**
- ii) Cuts/Lacerations**
- iii) Ligament injuries**

### **4) FRACTURES**

#### **1) INTRODUCTION**

This guidance is written primarily for jockeys but may also be of help to trainers when they have injured work riders or stable staff. It aims to give advice on average recovery times and simple guidance for initial treatment of common racing injuries. It can be accessed online at [www.thepja.co.uk](http://www.thepja.co.uk) where it will be continuously updated. If you have any suggestions or enquiries please email Dr Anna-Louise Mackinnon at [alm@thepja.co.uk](mailto:alm@thepja.co.uk).

The BHA/Racing Welfare have recently undertaken a study looking at the types of injuries sustained by staff in racing yards. This guidance document covers the most severe and common types of injuries identified in the research.

#### **2) HEAD INJURIES**

Following any head injury which results in concussion it is important that the jockey is given time to rest and fully recover before returning to exercise (e.g. riding or yard work). The jockey will recover quicker if they completely rest until their symptoms have fully resolved at rest. Normally this will take 48hrs. The jockey may then undertake light exercise (e.g. 15min walk). If after this they have a recurrence of their symptoms they should rest for the following 24hrs and try light exercise again after complete resolution of their symptoms. If symptom free after light exercise they may progress to moderate exercise (e.g. 1hr walk, gentle 20min run). Again if symptoms return then rest and start again with light exercise, if no recurrence of symptoms they may gradually increase the amount of exercise they are able to do until able to exercise at full capacity. They may then return to riding. **See Figure 1.**

The majority of jockeys with concussion will fully recover within 7 days of their initial injury. Those who do not, may, need a period of prolonged rest and in severe cases may be unable to ride for 6-12 months.

The following link gives further advice regarding head injuries and when you should get urgent medical attention:

<http://www.patient.co.uk/health/Head-Injury-Instructions.htm>

The following are all common symptoms of concussion:

Headache  
Neck pain  
Nausea/vomiting  
Drowsiness  
Dizziness

### **Important note regarding REST**

**REST** means- no exercise, no television, no computer, no telephone i.e. rest the body and mind, this is the ideal although understandably not always achievable.

### **3) SOFT TISSUE INJURIES**

The following guidance can be applied to all soft tissue injuries:

- 1) Rest fully for 48hrs
- 2) Avoid alcohol, hot baths/showers and hot rubs
- 3) Apply ice, wrapped in tea towel for 15mins 2hrly for first 48hrs
- 4) Elevate the area
- 5) Use compressive bandage if comfortable and practical

#### **i) HAEMATOMA**

This is what you get when a horse kicks you on the thigh. It is due to bleeding into and around the muscle and can be very painful and take around 6 weeks to fully resolve. If a fracture is suspected then go to A&E. The following steps should be taken when dealing with this injury:

- 1) Complete rest of affected area for 48hrs
- 2) Avoid alcohol, hot baths/showers and hot rubs (this causes further bleeding and swelling and it will take longer to heal)
- 3) Apply ice, wrapped in tea towel for 15mins 2hrly (watch out for ice burns) for first 48hrs
- 4) Elevate the area
- 5) Use compressive bandage if comfortable and practical

- 6) After 48hrs start to stretch and move as pain allows-if it hurts then stop.
- 7) Only return riding when able to walk without pain
- 8) If possible see a physiotherapist

Occasionally this type of injury does not recover within 6 weeks and you will need to see a doctor and possibly have an x-ray.

#### ii) CUTS/LACERATIONS

- 1) Clean with antiseptic and cover
- 2) If a foreign body is present and unable to easily remove this then go to A&E.
- 3) If stitches required go to A&E
- 4) If returning to work with a laceration then ensure it is covered with a waterproof dressing

#### iii) LIGAMENT INJURIES

E.g. Twisted ankle

- 1) Rest fully for 48hrs
- 2) Avoid alcohol, hot baths/showers and hot rubs
- 3) Apply ice, wrapped in tea towel for 15mins 2hrly for first 48hrs
- 4) Elevate the area
- 5) Use compressive bandage if comfortable and practical
- 6) Start to move ankle and gradually put weight through leg after 24-48hrs depending on pain
- 7) Only return to riding once able to hop on affected ankle 10 times
- 8) Important to see a physio and continue to do exercises until ankle fully recovered

The following link gives advice on ankle sprains:

<http://www.patient.co.uk/health/Sprained-Ankle.htm#>

## 4) FRACTURES

Figure 2 gives the average return to work times for the most commonly seen fractures in racing. Ideally any jockey with a fracture should see a physiotherapist regularly who will advise on rehabilitation. Full bone healing should be confirmed by the orthopaedic surgeon before returning to riding. A jockey should only return to race riding once back to full strength and fitness-this can be assessed by the team at Oaksey House.

Site of fracture	Average time to return to racing
Femur (thigh)	170 days
Tibia/fibula (calf)	130 days
Radius/ulnar (forearm)	62 days,
Clavicle (collarbone)	34 days

**Figure 1-Return to work following concussion**

