



**STRENGTH IN PAIN
FOUNDATION**

SURFER'S CONCUSSION & BRAIN INJURY GUIDE

RECOGNIZE. RECOVER. PROTECT YOUR BRAIN.



**KNOW THE SIGNS.
TAKE ACTION.
STAY IN THE LINEUP.**

This guide is here to help surfers recognize concussion symptoms, understand recovery options, and protect long-term brain health.

FOLLOW US



**RESPECT THE OCEAN.
KNOW YOUR LIMITS**

CONCUSSIONS IN SURFING

Concussions can happen anywhere, anytime in the water. Surfing involves unique risks from both direct impacts and the forces of the ocean.

COMMON WAYS CONCUSSIONS HAPPEN



BOARD IMPACT

Surfboard to the head.



COLLISION

Hitting another surfer.



REEF OR BOTTOM IMPACT

Impact with the reef or ocean floor.



WAVE HOLD-DOWN

Held under by a wave.



VIOLENT WIPEOUT

Thrown around in white water.



THE BIG PICTURE

Repetitive sub-concussions can lead to Post-Concussion Syndrome (PCS) and even long-term brain changes such as CTE (Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy), which has been linked to repetitive head injuries in contact sports.



IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A DIRECT HIT

Even smaller impacts or violent shaking from wipeouts can contribute to brain stress over time.



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YOUR BRAIN IS IRREPLACEABLE.

WHAT TO DO IMMEDIATELY

If you think you've had a concussion, take these steps to protect your brain and give yourself the best chance to recover.



FIRST 24 HOURS

Focus on safety and rest.



Get medical evaluation

Have a professional rule out serious injury.



Rest your brain and body

Avoid physical and mental exertion.



Hydrate well

Drink plenty of water.



Avoid alcohol, drugs and caffeine

These can slow your recovery.



NEXT SEVERAL DAYS

Recover gradually and monitor symptoms.



Follow medical advice

Your provider will guide your recovery.



Gradually return to normal activities

When symptom-free at rest and with light activity.



Limit screen time

Reduce time if symptoms are present.



Monitor symptoms

If they worsen, seek help.



Be patient

Recovery takes time. Pushing too soon can set you back.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS



NO SURFING

until your symptoms have resolved and you are cleared by a professional.



THERE WILL BE ANOTHER SWELL.

Your brain health comes first.



IF SYMPTOMS PERSIST

see a provider experienced in treating brain injury. We can help you find one.



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POST-CONCUSSION SYNDROME (PCS)

Some people experience symptoms that last weeks, months, or longer after a concussion. This is known as Post-Concussion Syndrome (PCS).

COMMON PCS SYMPTOMS



Headaches /
Pressure Feeling
Inside the Head



Dizziness /
Vertigo



Brain Fog



Memory
Problems



Trouble
Concentrating



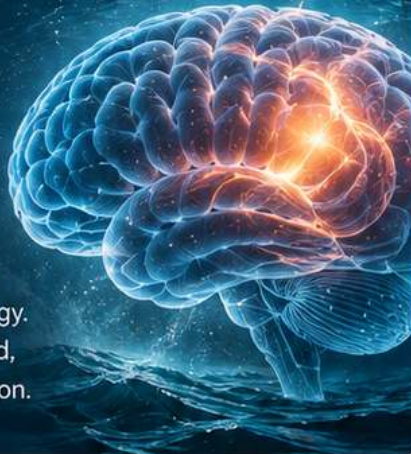
Sleep
Disturbances



Irritability,
Anxiety or
Depression

WHY SYMPTOMS HAPPEN

A concussion can cause temporary disruption in how your brain cells communicate and how your brain uses energy. This can affect thinking, mood, sleep, and overall daily function.



WHEN TO SEEK HELP

If symptoms persist, worsen, or interfere with daily life, see a healthcare provider experienced in treating brain injury.



- Symptoms last more than a few weeks
- Getting worse over time
- Severe or different headaches
- Increasing confusion
- Changes in vision, balance, or behavior



YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

Persistent symptoms are real and treatable. With the right care and guidance, most people improve over time.



RECOVERY LOOKS DIFFERENT FOR EVERYONE.

Be patient, listen to your body, and give yourself grace.



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BRAIN RECOVERY TOOLBOX

Many tools can support brain healing after a concussion. Work with a knowledgeable provider to create a plan that fits your needs.



HYPERBARIC OXYGEN THERAPY (HBOT)

May support brain healing by reducing inflammation and improving oxygen utilization.



HYDRATION

Proper hydration supports brain function, nutrient delivery, and recovery. Drink plenty of water daily.



PHYSICAL THERAPY

Supports balance, coordination, neck health, and overall brain function through targeted, hands-on treatment.



STRESS REDUCTION

Meditation, breathwork, and relaxation techniques can calm the nervous system and support recovery.



NUTRITION & SUPPLEMENTS

Anti-inflammatory foods and certain supplements (like omega-3s, curcumin, and magnesium) may support brain repair and energy.



QUALITY SLEEP

Restorative sleep is critical for brain recovery, memory, and cognitive function.



A WHOLE-BRAIN APPROACH

The brain works as a system. Combining the right tools—treatment, lifestyle, and support—gives you the best chance to heal and return to the water stronger.



RETURNING TO SURFING SAFELY AND SMARTLY

Take the time your brain needs to heal. A gradual return helps reduce the risk of another injury and supports long-term recovery.

A GRADUAL RETURN PLAN

1

REST FIRST



Be completely symptom-free at rest before starting.

**AT LEAST
24-48 HOURS**



2

LIGHT ACTIVITY



Walk, gentle cardio, and daily activities as tolerated.

1-2 DAYS



3

MODERATE ACTIVITY



Increase intensity, but avoid high-risk situations.

1-2 DAYS



4

RETURN TO SURF (EASY SESSIONS)



Short, low-intensity sessions in smaller waves with plenty of rest.

2-3 DAYS



5

FULL RETURN



Gradually return to regular surfing and more challenging conditions.

ONGOING



SEVERE HEAD INJURIES OR HEAD WOUNDS

If you experienced a more severe head injury, loss of consciousness, or have a head wound, stay out of the water for at least 7 to 14 days while closely monitoring your symptoms.



**AT LEAST
7-14 DAYS**

IMPORTANT TIPS



Start with smaller, cleaner waves.
Avoid heavy or crowded lineups.



Keep sessions short at first.
Quality over quantity.



Bring a buddy.
They can help monitor you.



Listen to your brain.
If symptoms return, stop and go back to the previous step.



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LONG-TERM BRAIN HEALTH FOR SURFERS

Every session counts. Small, consistent habits can help protect your brain, support recovery, and keep you in the water for the long run.

KEY HABITS FOR BRAIN HEALTH



RESPECT YOUR LIMITS

Avoid pushing through symptoms. Take breaks and know when to stay out of the water.



STAY HYDRATED

Proper hydration supports brain function, reaction time, and overall performance.



NOURISH YOUR BRAIN

Eat a balanced, anti-inflammatory diet to support long-term brain health.



PRIORITIZE SLEEP

Quality sleep helps with brain repair, memory, and cognitive function.



MANAGE STRESS

Meditation, breathwork, and time in nature can support emotional regulation and brain resilience.

A HEALTHIER BRAIN KEEPS YOU IN THE WATER

Protecting your brain isn't just about avoiding another injury—it's about ensuring you can keep doing what you love, for years to come.



THE BIG PICTURE



Surf smarter.

Choose safer conditions and be aware of your surroundings.



Support your brain.

Hydrate, eat well, exercise, and get quality sleep.



Know the signs.

Be informed about concussion symptoms and when to seek help.



Give your brain time.

When in doubt, stay out and allow time to recover.



**HEALTHY HABITS TODAY
FOR MANY MORE SESSIONS TOMORROW.**



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KEY TAKEAWAYS

SURF SMARTER FOR A HEALTHIER BRAIN

Surfing is good for the mind and body. With awareness, preparation, and smart habits, you can reduce risk, protect your brain, and keep doing what you love.



KNOW THE RISKS

Understand how concussions happen and take steps to reduce them.



BE PREPARED

Use the right equipment, surf within your limits, and be aware of your surroundings.



LISTEN TO YOUR BRAIN

If you hit your head or notice symptoms, get out of the water and rest.



GET PROPER CARE

Seek medical attention and follow a structured recovery plan before returning to surf.



BUILD LONG-TERM BRAIN HEALTH

Stay hydrated, eat well, prioritize sleep, manage stress, and enjoy the many benefits of surfing for overall well-being.

THE REWARD

With the right knowledge and care, you can continue to enjoy the ocean while protecting your brain for a lifetime of waves.



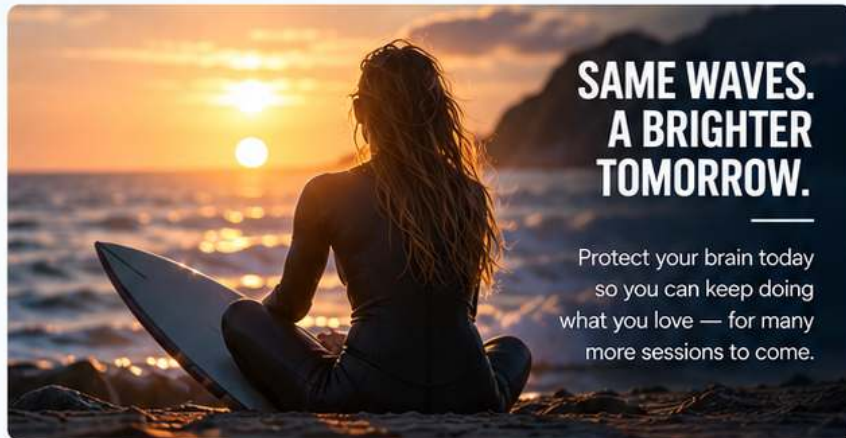
A HEALTHIER
BRAIN



A STRONGER
YOU



MORE WAVES
TOMORROW



SAME WAVES. A BRIGHTER TOMORROW.

Protect your brain today so you can keep doing what you love — for many more sessions to come.



SURF SMART. PROTECT YOUR BRAIN.

HEALTHIER WAVES TODAY. MORE TOMORROW.



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