

# Parkwood Institute Acquired Brain Injury Outpatient Program Tip sheet



## Using a timer

After a concussion people may lose track of time easily. They push through symptoms because they don't know how long they have been doing an activity. Using a timer can help plan rests and time to check on symptoms.

Your concussion symptoms may be worse if you are in a busy environment. Think of how busy the grocery store is. There are many things and people to look at and noises to hear. That's a lot of information for your brain to process. Using a timer to set time restrictions for activities like grocery shopping helps ensure you take a break before you have symptoms.

### What kind of timer is best?

A timer could be on your microwave, oven, cellphone or tablet as long as it has an alarm/beep/light that notifies you when the time has elapsed.

### How to use it

Set the timer for a set amount of time. Then take a break from the task you are doing for a set amount of time. Rest during your break or do light activity. For example read for 20 minutes then take a walk for 10 minutes, rest or grab a healthy snack. Or plan for 20 minutes in the grocery store and have a short list. This will give your brain the break it needs for recovery and to prevent the onset of symptoms.

### How to progress

Gradually set the timer for longer periods of time. Five minutes every few days is a good start. Your goal is to work symptom-free or without a lasting increase in symptoms.