

How Effective is Your Helmet in Mitigating a Concussion?

If you are like most cyclists, you bought a helmet and put it on for every ride. But, have you considered whether it would actually mitigate a potential concussion when you need it most? I get it, the last thing we want to think about when heading off for a ride is the potential of a concussive injury from some type of crash or fall. The time to think about it is now, before the need arises.

I recently interviewed Dr. Barry Miller of the Virginia Tech Helmet Ratings Lab for a Live Stream program. I learned in a crash or fall situation the blow to the head striking the ground or an object creating a potential concussive force occurs about five times faster than a blink of the eye, which itself takes only a tenth of a second. That means the helmet we wear must be designed to protect our brain from the linear and rotational impact forces on our brain which occur in milliseconds. Fortunately, most of us will never experience such an event. However, the ability of a helmet to mitigate those impact forces will largely determine whether a concussion will result.

Deciphering helmet effectiveness by reading manufacturers promotional literature is confusing, at best. The VA Tech Helmet Lab applies the same testing protocol to every helmet they test. Then they score each helmet; the lowest score provides the highest level of protection. They arrive at the score this way: out of 100 impacts to someone not wearing a helmet, they calculate 47 will result in a concussion or worse. They score helmets by the number of concussions likely to occur of those 47 impacts. This can be expressed as a percentage. A 5 Star helmet (their top rating) has a greater than 70% concussion reduction, approximately. Currently, their top helmet has a 9.2 rating. We

want helmets with the lowest scores within the 5 Star category. These ratings are approximations, so don't get too wrapped up about having the very lowest score.

These ratings change every year as manufacturers continue to [develop better technologies for concussion mitigation](#).

Improvements have been made rapidly over the last two years. This would be a good time to check [their website](#) to make sure you are wearing a helmet you have confidence will protect you if the unexpected occurs.

Jim Dodson is an experienced bicycle accident lawyer, cyclist and bicycle safety advocate who has been representing accident victims for over 25 years. Although his primary office is in Clearwater, he represents injury victims throughout Florida. He is the author of the [Florida Bicycle Accident Handbook](#) which answers the most commonly asked questions by injured cyclists. If you have questions about a Florida cycling accident this valuable resource is available to you absolutely free of charge at www.jimdodsonlaw.com.

**Legal information is not legal advice. Nothing in this article may be considered legal advice. If you have specific questions for Jim Dodson, simply call his office at 1-888-340-0840. There is never a charge to talk about your case.*