

Taking Back Control from a Substance Addiction

Overcoming substance abuse takes a great amount of work and persistence. Quitting addictive drugs and maintaining sobriety long-term is a matter of willpower and resolve, but an addict doesn't need to do it alone. Below are some tips that an addict or a supportive loved one should consider for addiction recovery.

Treatment and Therapy

Addiction treatment is the first thing to tackle. An addict has to get off the substances before he or she can start to develop a sober lifestyle. In some situations, addiction treatment is court-mandated for an individual who is facing criminal charges for drug possession.

A treatment program could start with a [medical detox](#), in which a doctor administers medicine to purge the body of toxins and manage acute withdrawal symptoms. This step isn't always necessary, but a common next step is outpatient or inpatient rehab. During this time, the patient undergoes individual or group therapy. Once the patient successfully completes the rehabilitation program, he or she can move into a [sober living](#) house (transitional living) where group therapy continues. After sober living, some recovering addicts might choose to continue therapy or join a 12-step program to help with sobriety.

Alternative treatments include holistic practices such as meditation, acupuncture, and art therapy. Holistic practice can be done without medical supervision and should, therefore, be approached carefully by those who need medical treatment.

Support

Substance abuse is difficult to beat alone, and the risk of relapse is high without being held accountable. Many addicts need support from others, making recovery a two-way relationship between the recovering addict and loved ones. Support can come in the form of [groups](#) (self-help, therapy, sober living, or 12-step), sober friends, family, significant others, and therapists.

Addiction has been linked to [attachment anxiety and isolation](#), so some addicts could benefit from interpersonal connectedness. Anyone who has loved ones addicted to substances can help by showing non-judgmental support, attending meetings with them, spending sober time together, listening and simply being there when needed, and possibly becoming a 12-step sponsor. Sometimes it takes a friend to call and say, "There's a meeting at 7 tonight. Want me to go with you?" Addicts tend to push away their loved ones, so it's important to never stop trying to reach out to someone with a substance abuse problem. They will eventually come around, but giving up on them would be a disservice to them.

Routines

Addicts get used to a routine of using drugs. For some addicts, the ritual of using is just as addictive as the substance itself. To break the habit, new habits need to be formed. Rather than waking up to a fix, the recovering addict could wake up to breakfast and a morning jog. It's important to incorporate [healthy habits](#) into daily routines, and diet and [exercise](#) are a big part. Adventure therapy, such as an outdoor hike, provides exercise and a sober bonding experience with friends.

The Friday night routine of getting high with friends can be replaced by Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings or movie nights with friends. Sunday Funday bottomless brunches can be replaced by family picnics and church. Any sober routine can aid in addiction recovery, especially if healthy habits are developed to replace the old ones.

Avoiding Temptation

Parties and bars can be the wrong places for an addict in recovery to be. If the [addict's triggers](#) are social, then they should know what those triggers are. Actively avoiding trigger situations and spending time with other sober friends is the best way to avoid temptation and learn to be with others in a sober environment. Some people find that they have to cut off friendships with others who create temptation. A life in recovery sometimes involves starting over with new hobbies, new communities and new friends.

Getting sober can be quick, but [staying sober takes time](#). It's not a magic pill that can work overnight. The longer an addict sticks to a recovery program, the longer they'll stay off. The hope is for permanent substance abuse recovery, but it requires commitment, diligence and a strong will.

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