

SELF-GUIDED INTERVENTIONS **RELAPSE PREVENTION**



BUILDSTRONG

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Play the Tape Through

Recovery from alcohol or other drugs is a process of personal growth with developmental milestones. If you find yourself having a desire to drink or get high and you are debating what to do, a great prevention tool is playing the tape through.

- 1 Inhale deeply, hold for a few seconds, and exhale slowly. Repeat at least 5 times.
- 2 Take a moment to imagine what will happen in the **short term** if you use the substance.
- 3 Take a moment to imagine what will happen in the **long term** if you use the substance.
- 4 Think of the consequences that would occur if you used versus if you did not use.
- 5 Think about what you'd feel once the high is over. Play out what will happen in your mind to the very end.
- 6 Imagine speaking to a friend, family member, or your sponsor about how you feel.
- 7 Call a friend, family member or sponsor.





HALT: Understand the Need

The key to a successful recovery is being prepared. At some point in your recovery you will face challenging situations, and that is where the concept of HALT becomes important. It prepares us for days when the urge becomes a challenge.

HALT stands for Hungry, Angry, Lonely & Tired. Preventing and managing these four natural human conditions will help you go a long way in keeping your addictive behaviour at bay.

- 1 Inhale deeply, hold for a few seconds, and exhale slowly. Repeat 5 times.
- 2 Ask yourself if you are feeling Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired.
- 3 When you find a response, feed that need.
Hungry? Have a snack. **Angry?** Remove yourself from the situation or engage in a physical activity like running or a brisk walk, or try a creative project like painting, singing, or writing. Meditation or prayer can be another way to calm yourself anywhere, any time. **Lonely?** Go to a meeting, text or call a friend, or visit a loved one. **Tired?** Take a long bath or short nap.
- 4 Call a friend, family member or sponsor to connect. You can choose whether to tell them about the urge you conquered.





Create Addiction Recovery Goals

Recovery goals will help you focus and encourage you to continue the choice of sobriety. It's important that they do not set you up for failure, so we recommend the SMART approach which has been found to be very successful in many areas of life, including recovery.

SMART stands for **Specific** (significant, simple), **Measurable** (motivating), **Achievable** (attainable), **Relevant** (realistic, results-based), and **Time-bound** (time-based or limited).

- 1 Keeping the SMART approach in mind, write down your goals. It makes them easy to track and makes them feel more “formal”.
- 2 Divide each goal into manageable steps or actions that you can take on a regular (daily, weekly, etc.) basis.
- 3 Speak to a friend, family member, sponsor or counsellor regarding these goals to create a sense of accountability.
- 4 Try putting the manageable steps into practice. Speak to your friend, family member, sponsor or counsellor about the hurdles and growth you encounter.
- 5 Modify your manageable steps if required.
- 6 Keep it going.





Avoid Emotional Relapse

Relapse happens gradually, beginning weeks or months before you pick up a drink or drug. Recognizing the early signs and developing coping skills will help prevent relapse early, when the chances for success are greatest. During an emotional relapse you aren't thinking about using, but your emotions, behaviours, and denial are setting you up for a relapse down the road.

- 1 Stop bottling up emotions.** Begin a daily emotions journal. Identify negative feelings and reach out to a counsellor to help you process what you're feeling.
- 2 Stop isolating.** The opposite of addiction is connection. Talk to and hang out with friends. If you've fallen out of touch, start by reaching out to one person.
- 3 Join a support network.** Try AA or a non-AA group such as SMART recovery. Don't try to go it alone.
- 4 Don't let others control your emotions.** Practice walking away. In your mind, rehearse sentences that will help you disengage from problematic situations, ie. "This conversation is not going anywhere. I'm leaving."
- 5 Change what you do.** Recovery is not just about stopping drugs or alcohol. It's about stopping what doesn't serve us well. Wanting your old life back "just without the using" isn't realistic. Be honest: your old life led to using.

Write down 3 repetitive, negative thoughts that need to change and go through other interventions to address them.

