



TIPS

The most important moment before relapse is not the final decision to use the substance. It is when you decide to expose yourself to triggers. It is best to avoid situations and people that could trigger a relapse. These are a few examples for when you are starting out in recovery:

1. **Stay away from relationships you've found difficult in the past.**
2. **Avoid family and friends, who have enabled you in the past.**
3. **Stay away from the people you used to drink, drug, gamble, or have casual sex with.**
4. Keep away from **bars, clubs, casinos, or places**, where you **used to hang out using** the substance.
5. **Understand what your body feels like when you are stressed, afraid, or depressed.**
6. Be cautious of **H.A.L.T.** - being hungry, angry, lonely and tired.
7. Be aware of the **times of the day or the week when you are most likely to use:**
 - At the end of an extensive, tiresome day at work; when you just need to unwind.
 - On the weekends, when you're feeling lonely and/or bored.
 - After visiting a friend and/or family member.
8. **Make other arrangements at those times to do something else:**
 - Rent or go to a movie to unwind.
 - Meditate; listen to calming music.
 - Take a yoga class, or attend the gym.
 - Have fun with your sober friends.
 - Occupy yourself with a hobby or do something creative during the weekends; gardening, painting, or journaling.
 - Attend an aftercare or support group meeting.
 - Focus on replacing substances with innovative positive activities. If you used to go home after work & drink, you will need to make a new plan to entertain yourself. Going home & staring at the wall will eventually lead to staring at the wall with a drink in your hand.

9. **It is also important to know the signs of impending relapse**, for example.
 - Persuading yourself that you can drink, drug, or gamble just one more time.
 - Remembering the times using made you feel good.
 - Forgetting the negative outcomes that accompanied your addiction.
 - Thoughts of using again ... this time it will be different...
 - Seeing your addiction-free life as a punishment, rather than the blessing it truly is.

10. **Don't try to do this alone.** Sharing your goals for sobriety with a friend makes all the difference. They can hold you accountable for when you make questionable decisions, for example, "I am just going to the bar to hang out." A friend will also listen and offer support when you are struggling and having a "bad day".

11. **Never doubt your ability to stay sober, or keep away from your addiction.**
When you recognise these signs in yourself, it's time to check yourself: Are you approaching denial once again? Addiction is the only disease that tells you, "You don't have a disease." But you do and the road to recovery might be filled with potholes, but keep going – it is truly worth it. Most of all, you are truly worth the serenity it grants!

12. **Don't become complacent with your sobriety.** Don't lose your focus on being sober; don't make decisions flippantly.

13. **If you relapse, don't give up!** If you make a mistake and end up back at day 0, know that you are not starting over, because you have gained knowledge, experience & confidence. Slipping up does not authorise you to go on a binge.

14. **Create new rituals.** How do you celebrate holidays, promotions, or any other happy occasion? If your answer includes any sort of substance, you'll want to get creative and discover something new. Spoil yourself; enjoy a nice dinner, or go on a weekend trip. Ensure that it is something that you get excited about.

15. **Remind yourself that cravings will pass.** Have you ever had that experience when you are ill, where you can't remember what it feels like, 'not to be ill'? The same happens with cravings – give it time and believe it or not, the feeling will go away. If you are feeling the urge to use, try to wait it out. Distract yourself; it is likely that your craving will lessen in intensity. It may not totally disappear, but it will become easier to resist.

"Recovery is a journey between two stations. One station represents total chaos, and the other represents total serenity. What is important is not where you are, but what direction you are facing".