



Relapse Prevention Plan Worksheet:

The Stages of Relapse:

There are 3 stages of relapse. While the early stages of relapse are the easiest to come back from, relapse prevention is possible during any of these stages. In order to make an effective relapse prevention plan it's crucial to recognize these 3 stages.

- Emotional Relapse.
- Mental Relapse.
- Physical Relapse.

Emotional Relapse:

Emotional relapse is usually a result of poor self-care. During this stage you don't want to use, but the emotions and stress resulting from your lack of self-care may eventually set you up for a relapse by creating a desire to escape.

Signs of Emotional Relapse:	Poor Self-Care:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Anxiety- Depression- Mood Swings- Anger- Being Defensive- Easily Irritable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Isolating- Not going to meetings- Not exercising- Eating poorly or irregularly- Breaking sobriety routines- Irregular sleep schedules or lack of sleep- Bottling emotions and stress

*** *Signs of Emotional Relapse can also be related to [Post-Acute Withdrawal Syndrome](#), which is a collection of psychological and mood-related symptoms that occur as the brain recovers from the effects of addiction.*

Living too long in emotional relapse will leave you stressed, exhausted, and the more stresses that arise on top of this the more you will begin to desire an escape. Wanting an escape will lead you into the second phase of relapse where you will begin to desire substances.



Emotional Relapse Prevention:

When it comes to Emotional Relapse, implementing a relapse prevention plan is as simple as evaluating and adjusting your self-care routines. Look at your:

- **Sleep:** 7-8 hours per night on a consistent schedule.
- **Water:** Drinking 10-11 glasses of water every day.
- **Nutrition:** Are you eating healthy food on a consistent schedule?
- **Exercise:** Are you maintaining your recovery workout schedule?
- **Socializing:** Are you spending time with people who support you.
- **Going to Meetings:** Have you been attending your recovery group meetings?
- **Self-Talk:** Are you avoiding constant self-criticism?
- **Assertive:** If something/someone is creating stress, have you communicated what you need in order to decrease that stress?

In the space below, detail changes you can make to your lifestyle to reverse emotional relapse.

My Plan:

Suggestions:

- Text or call someone right now and tell them you're going to a group tomorrow at time. Ask if they can come with you.
- List your virtues. Google a list of virtues if you can't think of any. Say them out loud to yourself
- Text/call a friend or loved one to chat. Tell them that you miss them and make plans.
- Set alarms every hour tomorrow to remind yourself to drink some water
- List some exercises you can do tomorrow during your lunch break or after you get home.
- Go make yourself a meal with a huge amount of carbs, eat until you're full, and go to bed early.



Mental Relapse:

Mental Relapse happens when you don't deal with the effects of emotional relapse. As a result, the desire to escape gets bigger until an inner battle with yourself begins. Part of you wants to use substances again and part of you knows you shouldn't.

Signs of Mental Relapse:

- All the effects of emotional relapse and:
 - Cravings for substances.
 - Rationalizing why you can use one more time.
 - Wanting to use substances or thinking about it.
 - Criticizing or "awfulizing" your sobriety.
 - Romanticizing your past substance highs.
 - Thinking about the people or places associated with using substances.

Mental Relapse Prevention:

One way to reverse the effects of mental relapse by recognizing what's triggering your desire to escape and implementing some useful changes. Triggers are stressful or traumatic things, feelings, people, places, or thoughts that make you crave an escape. For people in recovery, this escape is often substance-related.

1. **List Your Past Triggers:** Think back to your addiction. What kinds of thoughts, feelings, people were around when you wanted to use? Now, think back to your past relapses (if any). What were the things, feelings, people, or stresses that sent you back to substances?
2. **Identify Similar Present Day Triggers:** Look at your list and ask yourself: Is there anything that is similar to your life right now? Circle anything that applies. For instance maybe in the past when you got home from work/school you felt really stressed and drank by yourself to feel better. Today you are also alone when you get home and also stressed.
3. **Make a Plan:** Think back to your recovery. What kinds of things have helped you deal with these triggers in the past? What would it look like to implement those again? In the above example, I'd want to implement a way to deal with stress better at the end of the day and not be alone when I got home.



My Triggers:

My Plan:

Other Mental Relapse Prevention Strategies:

Don't Stay Idle: If you're feeling the urge to use, glamorizing your past use, or having a craving don't sit with it. Get up, move, go for a walk, get on a bike. Do something active to distract yourself. Addiction related thoughts thrive in inactivity, so don't give them time to grow.

Play the Tape: Relapse usually happens after rationalizing: This time will be different, I can have just one drink, nobody will find out, etc. If you feel this way, play the tape through. Say you have that drink, what happens next? In the space below, remind yourself of all the reasons you stopped in the first place.

What happens AFTER I use:



Physical Relapse:

Physical relapse is the final stage of relapse. As the name implies, you are taking physical action towards using again.

Signs of Physical Relapse:

- Buying drugs or alcohol.
- Driving somewhere with the intention of buying drugs or alcohol.
- Calling people who you know have drugs.
- Lying to make it easier to relapse.

Physical Relapse Prevention:

This is the hardest stage to come back from. But even if you've reached physical relapse, it's important to remember that you aren't powerless. In fact, you can still come back from this by doing two things:

1. **Give It 30 minutes:** If you're about to use, set a timer for 30 minutes. Make yourself a promise to wait 30 more minutes.
2. **Call Someone Right Away:** Call your mom, dad, sponsor, partner, spouse, friend, coworker, teammate, or anyone. Tell them you're about to use, and you need to get out of wherever you are.

Ending Relapse:

There is no cure for addiction. But that doesn't mean you can't live a fun and fulfilling life. If you're ready to stop relapsing, call (503) 850-2474.