

## Helping the Body and Mind Recover from a Chemical Dependency

If you or a loved one is chemically dependent, the first step to recovery is accepting a problem and deciding to get help. From there, the journey has just begun. Being addicted to a substance affects the body and the mind, and to fully recover, you'll have to address all of the physical, behavioral, and mental patterns that have developed over your addiction.

Given that taking the first step is always the hardest, once you decide to seek help, there is hope; success can be achieved through determination. When you restore your physical and mental self, you will get more of your life back, chemical-free. Read on for information on how you or a loved one can fully recover.



### Treating the Body Right

When quitting a substance, it will take time for the body to adjust to life without it. Your doctor will know if you should have medical help while quitting the drug, or if it is safe to quit “cold turkey” without any medical assistance.

Exercise can be a valuable part of recovery. Engaging in exercise helps to release stress and also to strengthen and return your body to health. Endorphins are released through exercise; these natural chemicals generate positive feelings that can further assist your recovery. Start small and build up from there when you begin an exercise routine. Be careful not to overwork your body limits; use exercise to release stress, not build up stress.

In addition to exercise, good nutrition is essential. Make sure you have plenty of fresh vegetables, fruits, and whole grains in your diet. Work to remove processed foods, additives, refined sugar, caffeine, and high-fat foods. Note that sugar and caffeine can actually increase cravings for drugs or alcohol. Drink plenty of water to help flush toxins from your system and maintain overall health.

Eating right and exercising will help you sleep better during this difficult time. Make sure you take time to rest, as it will be an essential part of your recovery. Prioritize sleep to aid in physical and mental recovery. Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night.

### Healing the Mind

Often, chemical dependency develops to cover or numb the emotional pain one is feeling. When the substance is no longer part of their unhealthy coping mechanisms, people may feel

the emotions they have masked for the first time. This is when the person has to put their energy towards learning healthy coping skills to work through and manage the emotional pain. Below are some activities that can help restore the mind to a healthy state:

- Write down situations or people in your life that trigger you to take the substance. Avoid them the best you can.
- Seek out a therapist who specializes in addiction and recovery.
- Surround yourself with people who respect and support your sobriety.
- Develop a routine of meditation, visualization, or other relaxation techniques.
- Meet and communicate with others at a 12-step program. The phone book or employee assistance program can help you find groups in your area to support you on your journey.

**Set Realistic Goals:** Establish achievable short-term and long-term goals for your recovery. Celebrate your successes along the way.

Remember that recovery is a unique journey for each person. What works for one individual may not work for another, so finding a combination of strategies and support that suits your specific needs and circumstances is important. Seek professional guidance and never hesitate to ask for help when needed.



#### This Month's Webinar

### **Supporting a Loved One with Substance Misuse**

Having a loved one with addiction can be heartbreaking, frustrating, and terrifying. Choosing how to support them can be confusing—the right choice is not always obvious. In this webinar, we will discuss recognizing signs of addiction and review choices of how to support your loved one. We will also review concepts such as enabling and codependency. You will walk away from this webinar with a clearer idea of how to support both yourself and your loved one.

[Log-in](#) any time this month to watch the webinar and ask the expert questions!