

Congratulations on achieving sobriety. Now welcome to the hard part: *Staying Sober*. I know, you're thinking getting sober was hard, how hard can *staying sober* be? Getting sober was nothing compared to the focus and discipline staying sober requires. You can never forget how painful getting sober was, though, or you'll have to do it again.

Other Resources

Narcotics Anonymous 12 Step Program: www.na.org

Alcoholics Anonymous 12 Step Program: www.aa.org

A directory of 12 step program websites:
www.dmoz.org/Society/Support_Groups/Twelve_Step/

Anonymous Substance Abuse Treatment
Facility Locator:
<http://dasis3.samhsa.gov>

>IN
FOCUS
RECOVERY

staying SOBER

SAMPLE COPY

Recovery is the rest of your life

Recovering from addiction is a life-long process. Long after physical dependency has faded into memory you will still be susceptible to the lure of your habit. One false move can lead to a serious relapse. But relapses happen, and they're not the end of the world.

This brochure is going to help you look forward, not backward. You must never forget where you have come from but looking to the road ahead will help you ensure that you never end up back there. Stay vigilant, stay positive, stay focused and you *will stay sober*.

Stay vigilant against your triggers and the availability of your drug. Remember how to say no in situations where you will have access to it. Figure out how to avoid these situations altogether.

Stay positive about why you are recovering. Remember your motivation, remind yourself that the worst sober day is better than the best hangover or withdrawal day. Being free of dependency is like walking out of a jail cell, and you're not the fool who will walk back in.

Stay focused on your small goals. Just this morning, just this afternoon, just this evening, just this one day. Be mindful of your situation and your self.

GET YOUR LIFE>IN FOCUS

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Real advice that worked for real people.

Only an addict knows what an addict suffers - that is why this brochure is full of the methods that real addicts discovered for themselves. Methods that helped them win their fight with drugs, alcohol and self-destructive habits. These methods might not be for you, but they are a good jumping off point for you to think of your own. Where applicable, psychological terms have been used to explain why the method worked.

1. "I say to myself, 'I am not going to [use] today.' I don't think about forever, I think about today." Breaking big tasks into smaller, easier ones is called 'chunking' by psychologists. Your brain works that way with complex information, and it makes hard tasks much easier.
2. "Instead of 'just one [use]' I indulge in a healthy guilty pleasure. I read a trashy novel, eat some ice cream, whatever I'll enjoy. Soon the pleasure of not [using] gives me strength to continue and outweighs the pleasure of [using]!" Putting the energy from one habit into another one is called sublimation. It was touted by Sigmund Freud as the only healthy defense mechanism.
3. "I look at my 'gratitude list'. Every day it gets longer." Reinforcing positive behavior is a staple of behavioral psychology. Why are you glad that you're sober?
4. "My system is to write down scenarios where I might be tempted to [use] and how I can beat them." Preparing for a difficult task and practicing increases the chances of success dramatically. It's not enough to know the answer, you also have to do the answer.
5. "I have a mental slide show of all the things I did when I was using. Whenever I tell myself that I'm not an addict, I play that slideshow. I go right back to being grateful for sobriety."
6. "I tell myself, and anyone who offers me [my substance] that I like myself more sober than altered. And it's true." A blanket response is easy to remember and every time you repeat it you strengthen your resolve.
7. "Get a home group and be of service." Being a part of a community touches our most basic human instincts. The social bolstering of a support group is invaluable, and a good replacement for the friends you're better off avoiding.

Your Mantra

A mantra is something that you repeat for power, calmness, focus or resolve. Celebrities use mantras to calm their nerves before going on stage. Fighters use them for the same reason before a fight, and for the strength necessary to break bricks. Monks use them to shut out the world and gain serenity. Businessmen can use a mantra for confidence before pitching a new product.

Your mantra should be something you find reassuring, calming and empowering. It can be a word, a phrase, the lyrics to a song or a sound with no meaning to anyone but you. When you say your mantra, you think of your recovery. You think of what you are doing and must do. You repeat it like a motto. You breathe deeply.

Choose your mantra well.

So, why are you recovering?

Was it a really bad hangover? Waking up with no money and no one to turn to? Did you see blood when you didn't expect it? Was it for your kids? Your home? Your family? Your job? Your health?

How many reasons do you have for being glad that you're sober?

Think about this question every day. Every day, write down an answer. Put the answer in a box. Every day, take an answer out of the box, read it and carry it around with you. When you get home, read it again, put it back in the box.

When you recite your mantra, think of that box. Think of how full it is and how much fuller it is getting.

Your most important sobriety skill is your **motivation**. Those reasons you have for attempting recovery, and the reasons that you are succeeding.

Relapses

Relapses are a part of life, and they may not be a part that you can avoid. Most addicts relapse. Popular 12-step programs say, "Relapses are part of recovery," and it's true. If you could just give up the habit and not look back what would be the big deal about recovery? Do not be discouraged, but the odds are that you will suffer at least one relapse.

This is an opportunity for you to remind yourself of your past life where you were powerless against your habit. You pick yourself up, dust yourself off and start again armed with more regrets and consequences.



You Can Do It

You may relapse, but you can keep that relapse short and continue with recovery. Don't give up because of a moment of weakness! With discipline, desire and self respect **you can continue your lifelong journey of sobriety.**