



Relapse Prevention Plan

A free recovery resource from Stepwise Recovery

Free to download, print and share

STEPWISE RECOVERY

Relapse Prevention Plan

Your personal action guide for staying safe in recovery

This is your relapse prevention map. You're not trying to be perfect—you're trying to notice early when you're drifting and have a plan in place before the urge gets loud. Fill this in when you're thinking clearly, not in crisis. Keep it somewhere you'll find it when you need it.

My warning signs

Relapse usually doesn't happen out of nowhere. Your body, mood and behaviour often send signals first—sometimes days or weeks before you're in real danger. Knowing your personal signs means you can act while you still have choices.

Emotional, mental and physical warning signs

- When I feel _____, that's a danger sign
- I tell myself _____ when I'm starting to slip
- My sleep changes like this: _____
- I stop looking after myself by _____
- I know I'm drifting when I _____

My triggers and safe responses

A trigger is anything that makes you want to use: a person, place, time, emotion, situation. You can't avoid all triggers—and you don't need to. What you need is to know them and have a plan.

People, places, and situations

- When I'm around _____, I'm at risk
- I can't safely go to _____
- When _____ happens, I want to use
- These people keep me safe: _____
- The place where I feel safest is _____

My daily anchors

These are the non-negotiable things you do every single day to keep yourself grounded. Not some days. Every day. They keep you connected to why you got sober and what you're protecting.

- I will _____ every morning
- I will connect with recovery by _____
- I will move my body by _____
- I will talk honestly with _____ about _____
- I will do something that reminds me I'm worth protecting: _____

My first five phone calls

Before you pick up your substance, you pick up your phone. Write down five people or services you'll call when the urge is strong. Not people who might use with you. Real people who understand, or services that exist for this exact moment. Tell them now: 'If I call sounding like I'm struggling, this is real. Help me say no.'

- 1. _____ (number: _____)
- 2. _____ (number: _____)
- 3. _____ (number: _____)
- 4. _____ (number: _____)
- 5. _____ (number: _____)

What I'll do in the first hour

The first hour is critical. You have choices in that hour. These tools buy you time until the craving passes—and urges do pass, even when they feel impossible.

HALT check and movement

Ask: Am I Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired? Cravings are louder when depleted. Move the urge through your body—walk, dance, cry, stretch. Anything that disrupts the pattern.

- If I'm hungry, I'll _____
- If I'm angry, I'll _____
- If I'm lonely, I'll _____
- I'll move by _____
- I'll call _____

Urge surfing

An urge is like a wave: it builds, peaks, and crashes. You don't fight it or give in. You sit with it and let it pass. Give yourself 15 minutes. Just 15.

- I'll set a timer and _____
- Something that grounds me: _____
- I'll remind myself that _____

My agreements with myself

These are promises you make to yourself when thinking straight. Not in the moment of craving—now. Return to these when your thinking gets confused.

- I will not use alone; I will _____
- Before I use, I promise to _____
- If I slip, I will not disappear; I will _____
- I will tell _____ if I'm struggling
- If I relapse, I know that _____

My crisis numbers and final words

Save these in your phone and write them down. If you're thinking about ending your life, call 999 or go to A&E.; Tell them you're having thoughts of suicide. You will be helped.

- Samaritans (24/7, free, confidential): 116 123
- NHS 111 (medical advice, any time): 111
- Emergency services: 999
- Childline (under 19s): 0800 1111
- Narcotics Anonymous: _____
- Alcoholics Anonymous: _____
- My support worker: _____

One slip is not the same as giving up. If you use once, that's information. Call someone immediately. Go back to this plan. Attend a meeting. The road continues. Recovery is not about being perfect—it's about being awake, being honest, and reaching out when you need to. You are worth that effort.

Keep going — you're not alone

This resource is one of a full library of free tools, worksheets and reading at stepwiserecovery.com/resources — take what helps and leave the rest. These tools are designed to sit alongside fellowship programmes, meetings and sponsorship — never to replace them.

The Stepwise Recovery Guides

Substance-specific recovery guides written by people who've recovered — for cocaine, ketamine, families, young people, and children. Free preview chapters, no email required, at stepwiserecovery.com/guides

Our 1-in-10 Pledge

For every ten guides sold, we donate one to someone who can't afford it — through treatment centres and prison recovery programmes.

Need help right now?

Samaritans: 116 123 (free, 24 hours) · FRANK: 0300 123 6600

Narcotics Anonymous UK: 0300 999 1212 · SHOUT: text 85258

Childline (under 19s): 0800 1111 · Nacoda: 0800 358 3456