

Visit 33 - Recovery from a Lapse, Revisited

Recovery from a Lapse

How do I recover after a lapse?



Recovery from a Lapse

Lapse vs. Relapse

Lapse

A lapse represents a temporary slip or return to a previous behavior that one is trying to control. It is usually a one-time occurrence.

Relapse

A relapse represents a full-blown return to a pattern of behavior that one has been trying to moderate or quit altogether.

<https://recovery.org/pro/articles/the-truth-about-relapse-5-misconceptions-explained/>

Recovery from a Lapse

Nine Practical Tips

1. **Get right back on track.** Stop drinking—the sooner the better.
2. **Remember, each day is a new day to start over.** Although it can be unsettling to slip, you don't have to continue drinking. You are responsible for your choices.
3. **Understand that setbacks are common** when people undertake a major change. It's your progress in the long run that counts.

<https://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/tools/worksheets-more/recovering-drinking-episode-when-your-goal-quit>

Recovery from a Lapse

Nine Practical Tips

4. **Don't run yourself down.** It doesn't help. Don't let feelings of discouragement, anger, or guilt stop you from asking for help and getting back on track.
5. **Get some help.** Contact your counselor or a sober and supportive friend right away to talk about what happened or go to an AA or other mutual-help meeting.
6. **Think it through.** With a little distance, work on your own or with support to better understand why the episode happened at that particular time and place.

<https://rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov/tools/worksheets-more/recovering-drinking-episode-when-your-goal-quit>

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Nine Practical Tips

7. **Learn from what happened.** Decide what you need to do so that it won't happen again and write it down. Use the experience to strengthen your commitment.
8. **Avoid triggers to drink.** Get rid of any alcohol at home. If possible, avoid revisiting the situation in which you drank.
9. **Find alternatives.** Keep busy with things that are not associated with drinking.

For additional support, see the modules on [drink refusal skills](#) and [handling urges to drink](#).

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