

4 Healthy Outlets for Dealing with Addiction

When coping with addiction, the road to recovery can be difficult. Half of recovery is learning to take your mind off your substance of choice, which can be extremely difficult without something to replace it. With that in mind, here are a few healthy ways for you to refocus your energy and speed the recovery process:

Exercise as a Healthy Addiction

[Exercise is beneficial](#) for not only the body, but also the mind, while also creating the potential to direct your energy into a beneficial addiction. The endorphins created when you exercise can actually stimulate the same centers that caused your addiction in the first place.

Being hooked on these positive endorphins while you improve your health is one of the best ways to cope as you recover. However, it is possible to exercise too much. A negative addiction to exercise can form when you begin to prioritize exercise over other important things in your life. Create a healthy schedule and stick to it to ensure you do not go overboard.



Hobbies to Fill Down Time

Find an activity or a [hobby](#) that you enjoy – an engaging activity that you can easily pick up during rough patches. When you feel at risk of relapse, cultivate a habit of picking up your hobby instead. Some good skills for this might be knitting, crocheting, cross stitching, coloring, drawing or writing. Anything portable and accessible is ideal for you to train yourself to reach for the hobby when an urge hits.

Of course, this shouldn't be your only source of therapy. A licensed therapist is a key component to recovery. However, distractions like hobbies can aid you when outside of professional rehabilitation. Having a crutch outside of therapy can work to prevent relapse and [overdose](#).

Meditation to Reduce Stress and Depression

Quitting any addiction comes with its side effects. These can be both mental and physical, including depression and anxiety. Side effects like this can be counteracted with meditation. The act of silencing your mind and truly relaxing for any stretch of time can be hugely beneficial to someone struggling with addiction.

It may be a good habit to take to meditating each time you feel tempted to use your drug of choice or participate in any risky substance use. Even if you simply make it a daily routine, it will vastly improve your mental health. [Learning to meditate](#) takes time and dedication but is worth the effort.

Adopt a Dog for a Sense of Purpose

It can be difficult for some to find a reason to quit their addiction. Dogs provide more than a reason to recover; they improve your overall wellbeing. In fact, [dog owners](#) have been found to have lower blood pressure in some studies, and dog ownership is believed to reduce stress, depression and anxiety, as well as provide other numerous benefits. Dogs provide unconditional love, a social ice breaker and a drive to get out of the house and exercise. Check your local animal shelters; there is bound to be a dog waiting for a new home that is right for you and your situation.

Recovering from an addiction is difficult. Not only can it be hard to find the drive to quit, but it can also result in depression, stress and mental struggle. The desire to return to your addiction can be strong and finding a way to refocus your mind is no easy task. However, it is important to find something to keep yourself busy and your mind off your addiction. Learn a craft, adopt a dog, start meditating or make a weekly exercise plan. Anything that allows you to divert your focus will be infinitely helpful on your road to recovery.

Jackie Cortez works closely with [The Prevention Coalition](#) and helps gather official, informative resources dealing with substance abuse and addiction. It is her hope that this information can help anyone whose life has been affected by substance abuse. Outside of bringing awareness to this topic, Jackie likes to relax when she can, whether it's enjoying a good book or playing with her dog.

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