



# 8 KEY COPING SKILLS FOR ADDICTION RECOVERY



## *99 Coping Skills List*

*Save it or print it to take it with you so you'll  
always remember them!*



[www.TightLinesFamilyMedicine.com](http://www.TightLinesFamilyMedicine.com)



*Addiction recovery is a lifelong process that can, at times, be exhausting, frustrating, overwhelming, stressful, and lonely. But there are skills you can develop to make rehabilitation a more positive and rewarding experience.*

*Beginning again, changing your habits, and restructuring your entire life isn't easy, but developing these 10 coping skills can make addiction recovery and the healing process less challenging while helping you avoid relapse as well.*



## ***#1. Learn to Relax in Any Situation***

Relaxation and stress relief are two of the main reasons people start using drugs and alcohol. But if you learn to ease tension on your own, you won't need to rely on substances like drugs and alcohol to help you calm down.

As you practice simple exercises you will develop new ways to de-stress, you may find it easier to overcome challenging situations and maintain sobriety.

Some common ways to lessen stress include:

- Deep breathing
- Walking
- Getting outside and enjoying nature
- Laughing
- Listening to music
- A warm bath
- Yoga
- Drinking green or herbal tea
- Reading
- Writing or making a list of things that bring you joy

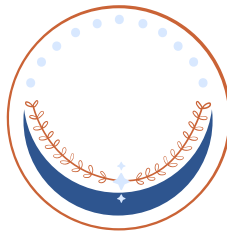


## ***#2. Respond Consciously***

Using drugs and misusing alcohol can cause you to act impulsively.

The longer you use substances for recreational purposes, the more reactive your behavior can become. Addiction challenges can cause you to lie, steal, burst out in anger, react aggressively, and act without thinking.

These types of rushed decisions usually yield painful results. Learning to wait before you respond can help you manage your impulses and make more rational and informed decisions. This skill becomes especially important during stressful or intense situations. When you feel rushed or pressured to make a decision, take a moment to breathe and clear your mind. Choosing to think and breathe before you react can help you address issues with a level head. Using this skill in everyday life can help you maintain relationships, manage emotions and change habits.

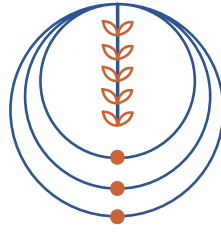


## ***#3. Connect to Yourself Through Meditation and Mindfulness***

Mindfulness and meditation can help you work through difficult thoughts and emotions, focus on the present moment, and observe your internal feelings and accept them without judgment or negativity.

Some of the benefits of mindfulness and meditation include:

- Better self-control
- A more flexible approach to life
- A higher degree of emotional intelligence
- Improved mental clarity and concentration
- An increased level of kindness and compassion
- Reduced stress and anxiety



#### ***#4. Be Honest with Yourself & Others***

When you struggle with drug and alcohol addiction, lying can become a habit by default. Before you committed to recovery, you may have lied about using your substance of choice. You probably lied about the effects the drugs or alcohol had on your body, too. To keep using, you had to continue deceiving others — and yourself.

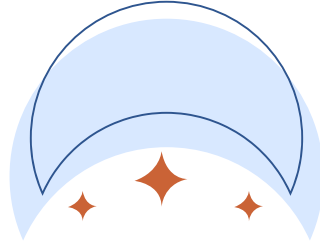
As you recover from addiction challenges, you have to stop lying and develop a habit of telling the truth instead. Being fearlessly honest is one of the most important skills you need to master for successful long-term addiction recovery. Be honest with yourself and others. If you're mad at a family member and unable to forgive, tell them. If you're dealing with intense cravings, ask your sponsor, counselor, or sober community for support. Regardless of the situation, making the decision to be honest will help maintain your sobriety.



#### ***#5. Keep a Daily Journal and Gratitude List***

Writing can be a great way to express, release, and work out any thoughts and feelings you may be dealing with. Seeing your thoughts on paper can also help you deal with your emotions quicker and more efficiently.

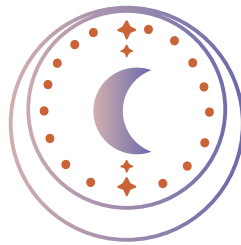
In addition to that, keeping a daily journal is a good way to take an inventory of what's happening in your life, acknowledge ways you can improve, and list the things you're grateful for. All in all, developing this skill can help you relax and maintain a positive attitude as you work to change your life.



## ***#6. Help Others***

As you become stronger and more resilient, help others who are struggling with substance use challenges. When you help other people, you feel good about yourself, which is one of the best defenses against substance use and relapse. Realizing you are capable of doing great things can help decrease high blood pressure, relieve anxiety, depression and ward off chronic pain like headaches and migraines.

A great way to help another addict is to become a sponsor in a 12-step program yourself.



## ***#7. Build a Sober Support Network***

You shouldn't be alone as you recover from addiction. Peer support is essential. Don't hesitate to build a healthy, supportive, and sober network of people. A strong network of friends can help you stay on track and will be there to catch you when you fall.

Take advantage of the social skills you learn in addiction treatment and be open to new relationships that will support your recovery journey.



## *#7. Exercise Regularly & Spend Time Connecting to Nature*

When you exercise, your body releases endorphins which help you feel good and stay happy. Physical activity also helps relieve stress, diminishes feelings of depression, and helps get rid of the chemicals and toxins your body has absorbed from drug and alcohol abuse. You should also make it a habit to treat yourself to nutritious drinks, meals and lots of water.



## *#8. Keep Busy*

Before you decided to quit using drugs and alcohol, you probably spent a lot of time finding, buying, and using your substance of choice. Now that you're working to recover from addiction, you need to replace those old habits with new ones. Do things you've put off. Develop new skills. Learn a new language. Travel to new places. Dance, read, write, hike, or play sports.

Keep your schedule filled with healthy and positive activities that will uplift your spirit and keep your emotional well-being intact.

*Reach out to us if you need help.*

*TOGETHER WE CAN*

# 99 COPING SKILLS LIST

Save this list or print out, put it on your fridge, tuck it in your pocket, take it with you and always have it available if needed!

1. Exercise.
2. Put on fake tattoos.
3. Write (poetry, stories, journal).
4. Scribble/doodle on paper.
5. Be with other people.
6. Watch a favorite TV show.
7. Hydrate.
8. Go see a movie.
9. Do a wordsearch or crossword.
10. Do schoolwork.
11. Play a musical instrument.
12. Paint your nails, do your make-up or hair.
13. Sing.
14. Study the sky.
15. Punch a pillow.
16. Cover yourself with Band-Aids where you want to cut.
17. Let yourself cry.
18. Take a nap (only if you are tired).
19. Take a hot shower or relaxing bath.
20. Play with a pet.
21. Go shopping.
22. Clean something.
23. Knit or sew.
24. Read a good book.
25. Listen to music.
26. Try some aromatherapy (candle, lotion, room spray).
27. Meditate.
28. Go somewhere very public.
29. Bake cookies.
30. Create a vision board.
31. Paint or draw.
32. Rip paper into itty-bitty pieces.
33. Shoot hoops, kick a ball.
34. Write a letter or send an email.
35. Plan your dream room (colors/furniture).
36. Hug a pillow or stuffed animal.
37. Hyperfocus on something like a rock, hand, etc.
38. Dance.
39. Make hot chocolate, a milkshake or a smoothie.
40. Play with modeling clay or Play-Doh.
41. Build a pillow fort.
42. Go for a nice, long drive.
43. Complete something you've been putting off.
44. Draw on yourself with a marker.
45. Take up a new hobby.
46. Look up recipes, cook a meal.
47. Go outside for 15 minutes.
48. Create or build something.
49. Pray.
50. Make a list of blessings in your life.
51. Read the Bible.
52. Go to a friend's house.
53. Jump on a trampoline.
54. Watch an old, happy movie.
55. Contact a hotline/your therapist or call us at Tightlines **910-399-7180**
56. Talk to someone close to you.
57. Ride a bicycle.
58. Feed the ducks, birds, or squirrels.
59. Memorize a poem, play, or song.
- Stretch.
60. Search for ridiculous things on the internet.
61. "Shop" online (without buying anything).
62. Color-coordinate your wardrobe.
63. Watch fish.
64. Make a playlist of your favorite songs.
65. Play the "15 minute game." (Avoid something for 15 minutes, when time is up start again.)
66. Plan your wedding/prom/other event.
67. Plant some seeds.
68. Hunt for your perfect home or car online.
69. Try to make as many words out of your full name as possible.
70. Sort through/edit your pictures.
71. Play with a balloon.
72. Give yourself a facial.
73. Play with a favorite childhood toy.
74. Start collecting something.
75. Play video/computer games.
76. Clean up trash at your local park.
77. Look at [yourlifeyourvoice.org](http://yourlifeyourvoice.org).
78. Text or call a friend.
79. Write yourself an "I love you because..." letter.
80. Look up new words and use them.
81. Rearrange furniture.
82. Write a letter to someone that you may never send.
83. Smile at five people.
84. Play with your little brother/sister/niece/nephew.
85. Go for a walk (with or without a friend).
86. Put a puzzle together.
87. Clean your room /closet.
88. Try to do handstands, cartwheels, or backbends.
89. Yoga.
90. Teach your pet a new trick.
91. Learn a new language.
92. Move EVERYTHING in your room to a new spot.
93. Get together with friends and play Frisbee, soccer or 94. basketball.
95. Hug a friend or family member.
96. Search online for new songs/artists.
97. Make a list of goals for the week/month/year/5 years.
98. Perform a random act of kindness.
99. Color.