

Initial Tools for Sobriety



This is when you feel driven beyond your control to act out. There is a lot of **'white knuckling'** at this stage. Long-term sobriety members have found these tools helpful in getting them past the moment of being driven to act out:

- **Delay**
 - **Summary:** When I felt driven to act out, one of my best tactics was to delay. Something (ANYTHING) to get me past that moment of feeling driven to act out.
 - **Results:** By waiting I frequently found that the urge to act out would pass (*although it did not feel like that at the time*). Taking my mind off of the immediate urge to act out was incredibly beneficial.
- **Take a walk, bike, work out, cook, do chores:**
 - **Summary:** Any of these items lets time pass in a productive manner – outer circle behaviours
 - **Results:** I would feel so much better about myself afterwards for doing something good.
- **Deep Breathing**
 - **Summary:** A simple exercise of slow and deliberate controlled breathing when panic is taking over. Often used to reduce stress and panic:
 - Slowly breath in through the nose for the count of 5
 - Hold the breath for the count of 5
 - Very slowly exhale through the mouth for the count of 5
 - Wait for the count of 5 before starting over with an inhale.
 - Repeat 10 times (or as often as necessary) and all will be right with the world once again!
 - **Results:** This lowered my panic and calmed my mind and my soul. It lowered my heart rate and helped to relax me and regain focus (*sanity*) once again.
- **Make a List**
 - **Summary:** List out all of the reasons not to act out. This includes all of the negative consequences of acting out and the positive benefits of not acting out.
 - **Results:** I would carry this list with me at all times (*and still do*). In the addictive state I forget all of the negative consequences and this list provides a helpful reminder of exactly what those consequences are and very valid reasons not to act out. Whenever I felt like acting out I simply reread this list over and over.
- **Get a Sponsor and work the steps!**

Set Modest Goals:

- Name one thing you want to accomplish today
- List one to three other things you'd like to accomplish today
- Accomplish the first one, and everything after that is a gift!

Do's	Don't Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone and TALK to your sponsor, especially if you were triggered, challenged and especially if you acted out that day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read news, in any medium, after supper
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone and TALK to at least one (ideally two or three) fellowship members, regardless of how your day was 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use electronic devices 1 – 2 hrs. before bed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read something light / funny / touching – in hard copy format! 	

Find Joy

- Don't schedule or obsess about doing it! When the thought of this pops into your head, or you need to take a time out, simplify the moment by identifying something around you which gives you joy, such as:
 - a child's smile or squeal of delight
 - a bird (ok, maybe not pigeons or seagulls, but at least the 'lowly' sparrow)
 - the sun, or the power of nature (rain, storm) or the gentleness of snow falling
 - an interesting or beautiful store window set up
 - a familiar tune you're hearing
 - a memory of what a friend did for you recently
- Delight your Inner Child
 - Go to a toy store – or a pet store
 - Watch dogs in a dog park
 - Check in with your inner child by asking: "how are you doing?" or "what do you need now to make you smile?"
- Plan a simple, informal get-together with friends/family: who would you invite? To do what?

Give Joy:

- Practice *random acts of kindness* and/or *senseless acts of beauty*. This could be as simple as stopping to let someone else cross your path or reaching out to a fellow member. In return, you may get a smile or a thank you in return, or you may get nothing—remember, you've taken the time to consciously do something selfless

Nightly inventory, wind-down

1. 10-15 minutes: get out your 3 circles lists or diagram, and:
 - write notable inner, middle and outer circle behaviours and activities you experienced over the course of the day (need not be thorough, but need to identify significant feelings and actions (e.g. more than a few seconds)
 - for those who have completed step 5, note which of your character defects triggered or drove any inner and/or middle circle behaviours and activities
 - an overall rating for the day – how did you feel? (can be a range) out of 10
 - summarize your day by considering the following:
 - What did I do well?
 - What could I do better?
 - What should I have done?
2. 5 minutes: meditation (solitude, stillness, surrender)
3. 1-2 minutes: write 3 gratitudes. Text these gratitudes to one person each night.
4. 1-2 minutes: recite Serenity prayer (plus any additional prayers important to you)

Advanced Tools for Sobriety

These tools have helped me grow and become a better person **physically, emotionally** and **spiritually**:

- **Meditation**: Focusing on a single subject for an extended period of time and letting everything else in the world and my life simply slide away (at least for a little while!)
- **Prayer**: I try and keep asking for things to a minimum and, instead, focus on giving thanks for all of the blessings I have been given, while being open/receptive to guidance and insights from my **higher power**. Recites the 12 steps.
- **SAA Meetings**: Attending SAA meetings on a regular and consistent basis. Truly listening, caring and sharing. The fellowship has enriched my life beyond my wildest imagination. See where you can give to the fellowship by chairing, being a literature rep, helping with the inter-group, etc.
- **Sponsorship**: Helping others in recovery (*giving back*) can be very satisfying and provides a lot of insights and reminders of my recovery from addiction.
- **Eating properly**: Eating the right kinds of healthy foods, in the right quantity and the right frequency. (right for me)
- **Journaling**: Writing about my inner most feelings and reactions helps me to understand them better and subsequently to deal with them in a more positive and effective manner.
- **Walking**: I still strive to go for walks as often as I can. This is not to help me deal with my addiction, but rather to be healthy and present in the world and enjoy being here.
- **Therapy**: Regularly see a therapist that is trained to deal with sexual addiction. I am a crazy addict that can convince anyone including myself, my spouse, and my therapist that my addictive thinking and actions that are justified. My therapist holds my feet to the fire until my addict gives up.

Resources (Note: we do not advocate any of these specifically, but list these as potential resources for you to consider)

- International Institute for Trauma and Addiction Professionals (IITAP) – good blogs, resources, <https://www.iitap.com/resources/>
- Sex Addicts Anonymous – meetings, literature, etc. <https://saa-recovery.org>
- Recovery Nation – articles, videos, coaching, etc. <http://www.recoverynation.com>
- SAA Toronto – meetings, personal stories, events <http://www.saatoronto.org>
- www.sexhelp.com: A site for those struggling with pornography use/addiction
- www.centerforhealthysex.com: daily meditations