

# 4 Key Tips for Getting Through Cravings

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Cravings are natural in alcohol and drug addiction recovery and through periods of relapse recovery, especially for people who have recently achieved sobriety. You can experience sudden intense urges to use drugs or drink, and it can feel too difficult to resist. But, you can get through cravings, and fortunately, they do pass. Maintain ongoing support through your outpatient drug treatment center. Seek advice there, and share the experiences you're having with others who know first-hand what you're going through.

Additionally, when you find you're struggling to overpower a craving for a drink or drug, use one of these time-proven relapse prevention tips:

## Reach Out for Support

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Just being able to talk to someone who really gets what you're dealing with can be enough to distract you from stressing and obsessing about the intense feeling of need to use. You may notice that the majority of cravings seem most extreme when you're alone, without anything to give you a break from your thoughts, which are fixating on the craving. Being with another person gives you an alternative point of focus. Plus it can help a lot not to feel so alone.

Call a friend, or fellow member of your recovery group, or a therapist. Just making the move to communicate can often help ease a strong craving virtually immediately. Today's ground-breaking 24/7 online support group meetings are an outstanding resource for helping get through cravings.

## Do Something You Enjoy

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Turn your attention to a favorite hobby, and commit to spending at least some amount of time on it. Turn up the volume on your favorite music while you're at it, or open a window and enjoy some decompressing nature sounds. Or, find a favorite movie or TV show and use it for some comforting background noise while you do something great. Maybe practice with your guitar, play chess or D&D online, work on your Mustang rebuild, master the new recipe, or indulge in any old pastime you love.

Journaling can be cathartic during a craving, and so can letter writing, songwriting, poetry writing, book writing, pretty much any kind of writing. Write a letter to your congressman about any one of the thousands of things that are worth offering your input on. Dance around the house. Play with your dog. Plan a trip. Paint a wall or a picture. Make a list of things you're grateful for. The possibilities for rewarding distractions are truly endless.

## **Get Some Exercise**

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Your first reaction may be, "Ugh, exercise." But, just pick something to do up on your feet. Take a walk, or a run, or a bike ride. Or, play sports on Wii. Exercise is great for stress relief, an important component in relapse prevention. Light exercise has been shown to have potent positive effects on the sense of wellbeing, mood, general mental health, and physical well-being. It's also effective for help curbing drug cravings.

You don't need to do a pro-athlete level weight training session or high-impact aerobic routine to realize the important benefits of exercise for addiction recovery. Just get a little physical. Walk on a treadmill or peddle a stationary bike while watching TV. Or, dance to your favorite playlist for a couple of 10-15 minute sessions per day. Follow the yoga lady on TV, or do your own freestyle movements. Just pop up off the chair and be active for some quality minutes to help crush a craving.

## **Consult With Your Doctor**

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Several factors can add up to make overcoming cravings and preventing relapse more difficult than the average person in recovery may experience. Depending on the *kind* of substance addiction you've been recovering from, the dosages you had been consuming, and how long you had been using, you might need some medical assistance initially to help you get through the predictable cravings.

Ask your doctor or addiction recovery specialist if medically assisted detox could help ease withdrawal symptoms you may be experiencing and help you safely stop using. Ask about available non-narcotic medications and other options that can possibly reduce intense urges and cravings.

## **Getting Through Cravings More Comfortably**

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Managing cravings is much of a challenge in relapse prevention. Using the above or other favorite coping mechanisms to weather cravings and relieve stress during cravings are keys to preventing relapse. Another is being as well prepared as possible for cravings, so

you can see them coming and be ready to stop them from dominating your focus.

Make a list of your triggers, and prioritize avoiding those in your daily routine. If you notice any trends, such as having the urge to drink after work, or in certain social situations, note those and adjust your habits to give yourself something healthy to do in those circumstances. For example, maybe take a new route home that doesn't pass a familiar bar along the way.

## **Renaissance Ranch, Ogden Utah**

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We provide comprehensive addiction recovery programs for alcohol and drug addiction. We can help you regain control of your life and develop powerful tools and skills for overcoming vulnerability to triggers and for enjoying making the most of your new life beyond substance abuse.

Our clients learn the science behind addiction and how to gain the power to free themselves from substance abuse. We also provide family therapy, to help loved ones who so often are struggling along with people in recovery, to help develop an understanding of deeper issues and rebuild strong bonds.

Renaissance offers free evaluations. We're available 24/7 to talk with you about affordable addiction treatment that helps heal people suffering from addiction and restores hope in a meaningful and happier future.

Call Renaissance Ranch, Ogden UT anytime at (385) 222-3737, or use our online request to schedule a free assessment with our friendly, welcoming team of therapists, and start on your way to recovery.