



# Setting targets: How to stop

If your goal is to stop substance use completely:

- Don't put it off. Decide a target date and stop on that date.
- Tell people you are going to stop. This will get other people ready to help you to stay abstinent.
- Set yourself up to succeed. Plan to stop when it might be easiest, not the hardest (e.g. planning to stop the same day you are going to have a party with your friends might not be the best option; planning stop when you have supportive people around you might work better).
- Get rid of all the drug paraphernalia and the drugs as well. A secret stash could bring you undone.
- Think about your higher risk times, and contexts. In the early stages it is probably best to stay away as much as you can from the cues, and triggers and contexts which remind you of drug use and were associated with use.
- You may have withdrawal effects after stopping use.
- See your doctor or other health worker for help if your withdrawal effects are serious.

## How to avoid relapsing

Relapsing means returning to drug use after you have stopped for a while. It is important to remember that changing behaviour can be challenging, but a little planning can help a lot.

It is important to identify the situations that could trigger relapse for you. This will help you to stop it happening.

Common triggers for relapse include:

- Feelings like frustration, anger, fear, anxiety, tension, depression, sadness, loneliness, boredom, jealousy, worry, grief or loss.
- Physical symptoms of drug use like craving or withdrawal
- Trying to test your will power or ability to control yourself.
- Coping with problems that come from arguments and disagreements.
- Simply being with other people who you used to use with – and some of these might pressure you to from others to use drugs.
- Think of your planning like a fire drill – a fire drill doesn't mean a fire WILL happen – but it means that if it does we are well prepared. Fire drills are specific – your relapse plan should be specific to you – each person has different risks and experiences. You will know best the kind of situations or moods or people that create risks for you to return to use – think about these and plan a response.

**Now that you have a target to stop, here are some related sheets that you might also find useful:**

[How to cope with cravings](#)

[How to be assertive](#)

[How to handle high-risk situations](#)

[How to prepare for and respond to a slip](#)

[How to manage a slip](#)

[How to practice mindfulness](#)