

10 Steps to Recover from a Lapse

In any lifestyle change, there are setbacks. True change takes time and a willingness to adapt to setbacks as they come. Not letting a setback completely derail your changes is an important skill. When you do have a setback or you find yourself in an old, unhealthy routine, talk yourself through these steps and see what you can learn.

1. Check your motivation. Remember, lifestyle change is hard work! What is your “why” (reason for wanting to change)?
2. Acknowledge the negative thoughts and feelings you are having about the relapse.
3. Identify the negative thinking trap. How were you talking to yourself when you had this relapse?
4. Try the straightforward technique. Consider if there is a more positive, realistic, or helpful perspective.
5. Try the double standard technique. What would you tell a close friend or family member who relapsed?
6. Recognize the tempting thoughts that are getting in the way.
7. Smash the tempting beliefs with a healthier response.
8. Ask for help from your support system (family, friends, therapist, coach, coworkers, etc).
9. Try stress management. Practice some of your favorite stress management techniques (e.g. breathing, nature, hobbies).
10. Get back on track. Consider how and when you would like to take the first step back toward healthy lifestyle changes (e.g. diet and activity).

