



CRAVING TOOLKIT

FREE PREVIEW

This preview contains selected chapters from the full guide.

The complete Craving Toolkit includes 15 chapters, 6 printable worksheets, and the tools to build your own personal anti-craving plan.

www.cravingtoolkit.com

What's in the full guide

1. First steps on your recovery
2. What a craving really is
3. Why cravings feel bigger than logic
4. The first 10 minutes: emergency tools
5. The addictive voice: how your mind talks you into it
6. Know your triggers
7. Different triggers need different tools
8. Different addiction patterns
9. Different personality styles in addiction
10. Shame, slips, and the danger of "screw it"
11. Daily practices that make cravings weaker over time
12. Build your personal anti-craving plan
13. Worksheets (6 practical worksheets)
14. When you need more than a guide
15. Final words

This preview includes chapters 1 and 4 (partial), plus the Emergency Craving Card worksheet.

Important note

This guide is educational and based on lived experience, recovery reading, and practical treatment frameworks. It is **not** medical advice and is **not** a substitute for professional treatment, therapy, detox, or emergency support.

If you are in immediate danger, at risk of overdose, severely withdrawing, or afraid you may harm yourself or someone else, seek urgent professional help right now.

Introduction

If you are reading this, there is a good chance you already know something most people do not fully understand:

A craving can feel bigger than logic.

When you are calm, you may know exactly what your addiction or compulsive behavior has cost you. You may know how many mornings you regretted it. You may know what it did to your body, your peace, your relationships, your confidence, your self-respect, or your future.

You may even be deeply sincere when you say, **never again**.

And then the moment comes.

Stress hits. Shame hits. Loneliness hits. Boredom hits. Anger hits. You feel under pressure, emotionally raw, or strangely empty. Or maybe it is not even dramatic. Maybe it is evening. Maybe you are tired. Maybe you are alone. Maybe the old ritual starts whispering before you consciously notice it.

That is how a lot of addictive behavior works.

It does not always show up like a movie scene. Sometimes it shows up like a routine. A mood. A permission slip. A thought that sounds harmless.

This guide is for that moment.

Not for intellectual discussion. Not for pretending recovery is neat. Not for giving you a perfect theory of addiction.

For the dangerous window between **craving** and **action**.

I'm writing this from lived experience, not from a distance. I have my own rich history with addiction and compulsive behavior, including overeating, self-harm, alcohol, cigarettes and drugs such as cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine, and benzodiazepines. Today, I have been clean for more than ten years and live a stable and fulfilling life. Recovery has allowed me to rebuild my health, my values, and the overall quality of my life in ways that once seemed impossible. I've spent years learning from treatment, rehab, recovery work, and the writing of people who have thought deeply about addiction from different angles: Anna Lembke (dopamine and the pleasure-pain balance), Marc Lewis (neuroplasticity and the learning model), Judson Brewer (mindfulness and habit loops), Gabor Maté (trauma, emotional pain, and compassion), and Charles Duhigg (the mechanics of habit).

What I care about most here is not sounding impressive. It is giving you tools that are actually usable when things get hard.

The good news is this:

- A craving is powerful, but it is not permanent.
- A craving is intense, but it is not a command.
- A slip is serious, but it does not have to become a collapse.

And recovery is often built not by one giant heroic moment, but by many smaller moments where you interrupt the pattern instead of feeding it.

This guide will help you:

- understand what cravings are (and why they feel bigger than logic)
- survive the first few minutes without making things worse
- break the spiral before it becomes a relapse or binge
- rebuild your relationship with craving
- handle different triggers more intelligently
- recognize the lies your mind tells you in danger moments
- build your own anti-craving plan
- recover faster and with more honesty if you slip

You do not need perfect motivation to use this guide. You do not need a perfect past. You do not need to feel strong.

You just need enough honesty to admit:

I need tools for the moment when my brain stops feeling trustworthy.

How to use this guide

This is not a book you need to read in one perfect sitting. Use it more like a field manual.

If you are in active struggle right now:

- read the first 5 chapters first
- build your emergency card
- identify your top triggers
- do the anti-lie exercise
- make one simple anti-craving plan in writing

If you are relatively stable right now:

- read the whole guide once
- mark the sections that fit your pattern most closely
- complete the worksheet section honestly
- revisit the book when your mind starts bargaining again

Most importantly: do not wait until disaster to use recovery tools. Your calm self should prepare your triggered self.

01 | First steps on your recovery

First of all you need to admit to yourself that you have a problem with addiction and that you are losing control over your actions. You can ask a very simple question: *Does it have you, or do you have it?* The test is straightforward. Can you stop the behavior for a month? If you stop and all you can think about is doing it again, or when you are doing it, all you can think about is how to stop—it has you. You are no longer driving the bus; you are trapped in the back while the addiction drives.

Secondly, you need to make a firm decision to abstain and change your behavior. Write your decision down, for example, *“I have decided to quit alcohol.”* Better yet, tell someone close to you who cares about you, so they can help keep you accountable.

Once you have admitted that you have a problem and decided to quit your addictive behavior, the real work begins: resisting urges, cravings and building new habits and values.

Defining your own bottom

In the beginning of recovery, it can be very helpful to reflect on what your personal “bottom” looks like. This does not have to mean the absolute worst possible outcome. Rather, it is a moment that clearly showed how painful or damaging the addiction had become. Identifying this moment serves as a powerful reminder. When cravings arise, remembering where the addiction once led strengthens the commitment to never return there.

Importantly, you do not need to reach a catastrophic “rock bottom” to begin recovery. Waiting for things to collapse completely is dangerous. You define your own bottom—the point at which you decide the cost of continuing is simply too high. Recovery begins when you recognize, “I don’t want my life to go any further down this path.”

Chapters 2 and 3 of the full guide explain what a craving really is — why it is a whole-state experience, not just “wanting something” — and why cravings feel bigger than logic,

including the science of hot states vs. cold states, the pleasure-pain balance, and why willpower fails in the hardest moment.

These chapters are available in the full guide at www.cravingtoolkit.com

04 | The first 10 minutes: emergency tools

When a strong urge hits, your job is not to solve your whole life. Your job is smaller and more realistic:

Get through the next 10 minutes without feeding the craving.

That is enough. Sometimes a whole recovery turning point begins with surviving just one ugly ten-minute stretch.

Below are practical tools. You do not need to use all of them. But you should know them, practice them, and identify which ones work best for you.

Tool 1: Delay

Tell yourself:

“I am not deciding forever. I am waiting 10 minutes.”

This matters because cravings hate delay. The urge wants speed. It wants automatic action. It wants to move before your wiser self catches up.

Delay helps because it:

- disrupts the automatic loop
- creates space between urge and behavior
- lowers the chance of impulsive follow-through
- reminds you that urgency is not the same as necessity

If 10 minutes feels impossible, start with 3 minutes. Then do another 3. Then another.

A lot of recovery is built in small repeated delays.

Tool 2: The strong counter-action

Another very helpful strategy, and my favorite which I learned in rehab, is to respond to an intense craving with a deliberate, strong *counter-action*. Instead of passively enduring the

urge, actively interrupt the pattern and try to build a negative emotional association with the craving.

For example, use short bursts of vigorous physical activity—such as push-ups, squats, or sprinting. The physical effort redirects your attention, releases tension, and creates a clear mental break.

But temporarily escaping a craving is not the main goal. The real goal is to profoundly reshape your relationship with cravings. By consistently responding to a craving with a challenging activity, you begin to change the internal association from pleasure and relief to something unwanted and unpleasant.

Choose an activity that is genuinely demanding or unpleasant at the moment. (If you already love exercise, an unpleasant chore - e.g. cleaning the toilet, may be more effective.)

1. Example: You notice the thought, e.g. “I would like a drink.” Instead of entertaining it, immediately do 20 squats while saying to yourself (in your mind) something like: “This f*cking craving trying to take control of me again. I am the boss here.” or “I’m not listening to this shit that’s ruining my life”. Do not be afraid to use harsh language, you really need to build a negative emotion toward the urge or craving. Afterward, shift into an engaging activity that requires your full attention so you stay in the present moment and stabilize your mind.

If you are in public or at the office and cannot do squats or some other physical activity, you can use a rubber band and squeeze it until your hand starts to feel sore.

2. Example: Similarly to the 1. example, after noticing the urge or feeling that you are about to relapse, do an unpleasant chore, such as cleaning the toilet, while again trying to build a strong negative emotion toward the urge and thoughts of relapsing. If the toilet is already clean, that is even better — get angry at your craving for forcing you to do a meaningless, unpleasant activity.

At the beginning, there will be times when you need to use this strong counteraction multiple times within a short period, especially when the craving is intense. But the key to using this tool is consistency. If you are truly consistent and respond to every urge, craving, or thought of relapsing with this kind of counteraction, you can dramatically reshape your relationship with it within two weeks and greatly reduce the appeal of your addictive substances and behaviors.

Tool 3: Leave the environment

If the trigger is around you, get out.

Examples:

- leave the bar
- leave the kitchen
- step out of the bathroom
- walk out of the store aisle
- put distance between yourself and your phone or laptop
- leave the room where you normally use, binge, or spiral

This may sound too simple. It is not. A huge amount of addictive behavior depends on remaining in the ritual environment long enough for the behavior to happen.

Sometimes people stay because they think they should prove they are stronger than the urge. That is unnecessary and often foolish.

You do not get extra points for standing next to the trigger while white-knuckling yourself. If leaving helps, leave.

The full guide contains 6 more emergency tools, including: body regulation, speaking the truth out loud, the recovery card, urge surfing (a mindfulness technique from Judson Brewer), increasing friction, and substitute actions. These 9 tools together give you a complete first-response system for any craving.

Get all 9 tools in the full guide at www.cravingtoolkit.com

Worksheet: Emergency craving card

Fill in these blanks:

- When I crave, I usually tell myself:
- The truth is:
- My first action should be:
- The person I can contact is:
- If I do nothing but wait, the urge usually:
- The reason I want to stay steady is:

Keep this card on your phone or in your wallet.

This was a free preview.

The full Craving Toolkit includes 11 more chapters covering:

- **What a craving really is** — and why it is about relief more than pleasure
- **Why cravings feel bigger than logic** — hot states, cold states, and why willpower fails
- **6 more emergency tools** — urge surfing, body regulation, recovery cards, friction, and more
- **The addictive voice** — how your mind talks you into it, and how to answer back
- **Know your triggers** — external, internal, and the chain that leads to relapse
- **Different triggers need different tools** — stress, loneliness, boredom, shame, celebration
- **Different addiction patterns** — alcohol, drugs, binge eating, behavioral addictions
- **Different personality styles** — all-or-nothing, isolator, rebel, high-performer, comfort-seeker
- **Shame, slips, and the “screw it” spiral** — how to stop one mistake from becoming a collapse
- **Daily practices** — sleep, food, movement, cold exposure, routine, environment design
- **Build your personal anti-craving plan** — a written recovery manual for your specific pattern
- **5 more worksheets** — habit loop mapping, craving log, cost-benefit check, slip review, and more

You do not need perfect motivation.
You just need better tools.

Get the full guide at www.cravingtoolkit.com