

## Making Healthy Habits a Cornerstone in Your Lifestyle Is the Key to Staying Clean



Image courtesy of [Pixabay](#)

Deciding to face an addiction is a giant step toward a healthy, happy life. In the course of a growing addiction, unhealthy habits developed typically need to be replaced with healthy ones. These tools can help you build a foundation for a better future.

### Exercise is vital

A physical fitness regimen is a major component in a healthy lifestyle, and it's a [vital part](#) of recovering from an addiction. Exercise helps repair the damage from addiction in many important ways. Exercise can help you stay clean by reducing cravings, lowering anxiety levels, and helping you feel better. When you exercise, you experience a release of feel-good chemicals in your brain. In this way, exercise can help [treat addiction](#) because it replaces the “high” your mind and body may be missing. What’s more, most people in recovery became more sedentary through the progression of the addiction. A fitness routine can combat other health concerns in addition to addiction, such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, and high blood pressure. Boosting your fitness can help improve your self-image, enhance your self-sufficiency, and bolster your sense of well-being.

### Getting started

If you aren't used to an exercise program, [Planet Fitness](#) recommends starting with short workouts without pushing too hard. Try to incorporate both aerobics and strength training workouts every week. As you become more fit, increase your workout intensity and duration. Some people find it helpful to plug short high-intensity sessions into their work schedule and save longer low-intensity workouts for the weekend. By setting aside the time slot, you are less apt to let your days get away from you and more inclined to feel committed.

Seniors can take part in the SilverSneakers program to help them stay in shape. This program is a [health insurance benefit](#) offered by participating Medicare Advantage plans. Members of these plans have access to thousands of gyms, YMCAs, and wellness centers across the country. Review your plan to see if you're eligible, or look online to find a center in your area.

### **Balancing your diet is a key**

Good nutrition is important for a healthy body, but it's particularly important when you're recovering from an addiction. Professionals cited by the [University of Southern California](#) explain, "...patients in recovery often face very high risks for malnutrition, eating disorders and dramatic weight changes, among other challenges." A [healthful diet](#) should include a balance of each food group, with whole grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy products, healthy fats (avocados, olive oil) and lean proteins such as eggs, poultry, fish, beans and nuts. Avoid processed foods, and monitor your portions carefully to ensure balance. Also, steer clear of added sugars and aim for variety in your daily diet.

### **Time in nature soothes your soul**

Spending time in nature is good for your overall wellness. According to some experts, being outdoors is a [natural antidote](#) to addiction, reducing levels of anxiety and depression. In fact, just 30 minutes in the great outdoors can reduce high blood pressure by up to 9 percent and can reduce depression by up to 7 percent. Being exposed to sunshine helps release feel-good chemicals in your brain, which by itself can lower your risk for a gamut of mental health issues including depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder and anxiety. Time in nature also helps reset your biological clock, combating the sleep deprivation that often accompanies addiction recovery. With improved sleep, you can feel more alert, better able to focus, and enhance your levels of concentration.

### **Combined efforts**

You can combine your exercise program with time outside by biking, rock climbing, walking your dog, or any number of other physical activities. You can also [pack a picnic](#) with a healthy sandwich, salad, and fruits, lie on a blanket, and soak up some sunshine. Mixing together your new, healthy habits is a great way to ease them into your lifestyle!

### **Lay your foundation**

Healthy habits can be pivotal in your addiction recovery. Include exercise, a healthful diet, and time in nature in your new lifestyle. You'll see that with these components as cornerstones, a healthy, happy life can be yours!