



Quick Start Guide

The Recovery Book: Answers to All Your Questions About Addiction and Alcoholism and Finding Health and Happiness in Sobriety

How To Use The Recovery Book

Newcomers, start here: Are you new to recovery? Or just thinking about sobriety, but not sure how to get started?

- Start by reading Chapter 1, Welcome to Recovery. Learn about the disease of addiction and how it might have affected you. Answer the questions in *Are You an Alcoholic or Addict?* (p. 3). Read about the serenity that a life in recovery can offer you (p. 7).
- Next, read Chapter 2, Your Recovery Plan. Learn more about what is needed to move into recovery and how the Recovery Zone System can help you make a plan.
- Answer the *Are You Ready for the Red Zone?* questions in Chapter 3 (p. 26).
- If you're ready for recovery, keep reading. Chapter 3 gives a broad overview of what you'll need to do in the next few months. Chapter 4 will help you think about any lingering roadblocks. Chapter 5 will help you explore treatment options, and when you're ready, Chapters 6–14 will help you learn about other aspects of recovery, such as detox, fellowship meetings, relapse prevention, relationship repair, health, and more.

Solidly sober, start here: Do you have a solid recovery (at least eighteen months) underway?

- First, learn about the Recovery Zone System. Read pages 17-23, and then see the *Are You Ready* questions for the Yellow and Green Zones (pp. 356 and 448). Answer the questions honestly. Where are you in recovery? Which Recovery Zone? Are you ready for the Yellow Zone (rebuilding your life) or do you need more time in the earlier Red Zone?
- If you're ready for the Yellow Zone, read Chapters 16 and 17 (especially the *Living Your Life, Healing Your Brain* summary on pp. 358-360) to learn what you need to do now.
- If you're ready for the Green Zone, read Chapters 21 and 22 (especially the summary on pp. 450-451) to learn about maintaining your recovery and reaching out to help others.
- Read Chapters 1 and 2 to learn more about addiction and recovery (including new brain science behind recovery) and building a solid recovery plan. Learn how to use the Recovery Zone ReCheck, a relapse prevention tool (pp. 19-21).

Family, friends, and community leaders, start here: Are you concerned about a loved one or members of your community?

- Start by reading Chapters 1 and 2: Welcome to Recovery and Your Recovery Plan. You'll learn about the disease of addiction and how it affects the brain and decisionmaking. The *Are You an Alcoholic or Addict* questions on page 3 can help you determine if someone really does need help. You'll also learn about what it means to "live in recovery" and what it takes to get there. The Recovery Zone System (pp. 17-23) in particular can help you to understand that recovery is a life-long process; it doesn't happen overnight.
- Then turn to Chapter 26, For Friends and Family (p. 538), to learn about how addiction affects the entire family and what you can (and can't) do to help someone. Be sure to read *Getting Help for Your Loved One*, starting on page 543.
- If you are ready to look at treatment options, read Chapter 5, The Many Roads to a Lifetime of Sobriety. It reviews all options, while Chapters 6-9 give more details on each.

Health professionals, start here: Are you a health professional who helps people struggling with addiction?

- Start with Chapter 1, Welcome to Recovery, to learn more about the disease of addiction, how it affects the brain and body, and how recovery can heal the brain. *Are You an Alcoholic or Addict?* on page 3 will help you determine if someone really does need help.
- Read Chapter 2, Your Recovery Plan, to learn about what your patients need to do to get into recovery, and how the Recovery Zone System can help them build a solid recovery.
- If you have patients who are ready to move into sobriety, read Chapter 3, Stop: Activate Your Recovery, to help them navigate the early days of recovery.
- To help patients build a treatment plan, read Chapter 5, The Many Roads to a Lifetime of Sobriety. It reviews all options, while Chapters 6-9 give more details.
- To learn about the physical and mental health issues that can occur in various stages of recovery, read Chapters 13, 20, and 24. Chapter 25 covers options for quitting smoking.
- Be sure to read about the very serious risks of medication in recovery; see *Medication Concerns*, pp. 290-293 and 475-481.
- Also see *Nondrug Approaches to Common Medical Problems*, starting on page 494 (especially *Pain Control*, p. 513).
- Help your patients learn how to find good health information online; refer them to *Calling Dr. Google: How to Find Good Health Information*, pp. 286-290.
- If you run a recovery group, you may want to assign sections or chapters as reading homework. The entire group can then discuss the material the following week.

The Recovery Book: The Recovery Zone System

The Recovery Zone System is a road map for a life in recovery. It gives clear guidelines on when and how a person in recovery can address various areas of life—treatment, fellowship activities, relationships, education, career, finances, recreation, and health—now that he is striving to put his life back on track. It helps him to know when he is ready to move forward in each of those areas. And it helps him to see when he might need to move *back* for a bit, to avoid a relapse.

The Recovery Zone System divides life in recovery into three distinct Recovery Zones: Red, Yellow, and Green. It also includes the Recovery Zone ReCheck, a relapse prevention tool, and TAMERS, a device for helping your brain heal.

The Recovery Zones (pp. 17-18; chart, pp.22-23)

- **The Red Zone: Stop. Activate your recovery.** For the first eighteen months or more of recovery, focus first and foremost on saving your life. Nothing else is as important.
- **The Yellow Zone: Proceed with caution. Build your life.** Once you have a solid eighteen months or more of sobriety, you'll move into the Yellow Zone, where you can put your energy into building the life you deserve and making your existence more fulfilling.
- **The Green Zone: Go. Celebrate your life.** After you have a few solid years of sobriety and have rebuilt your life, you'll move into the Green Zone. Then it's time to celebrate your life, do what you can to live a long and healthy life, and help others find recovery.

The Recovery Zone ReCheck (pp. 18-21)

The Recovery Zone ReCheck is an easy-to-use relapse prevention tool. It only asks you to take a focused inventory once a month or so, answer some basic questions, and then take action based on your answers.

Your Brain in Recovery: TAMERS (pp. 11-13)

TAMERS is a simple device that helps people in recovery remember what they need to do—every day—to use the power of neuroplasticity to heal their brains.

- Think about recovery, **T**alk about recovery
- **A**ct on recovery, connect with others
- **M**editate and **M**inimize stress
- **E**xercise and **E**at well
- **R**elax
- **S**leep

The Recovery Zone System

plus:
Chapter 1. Welcome to Recovery
Chapter 2. Your Recovery Plan
Chapter 26. For Family and Friends

		RED ZONE
	FOCUS	Stop. Activate your recovery. Stop everything you are doing and save your life. Focus entirely on survival and your recovery. [Chapters 3-15]
	TIMELINE	First commitment to 1.5–3 years in recovery.
	ARE YOU READY?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have an honest and ongoing desire to stop drinking or using drugs? • Are you ready to focus exclusively on recovery? • Are you ready to save your life? [3-4]
RECOVERY ACTIVITIES	RECOVERY TREATMENT	Start professional treatment, if needed, with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detox • Inpatient or outpatient treatment • Guidance to address issues such as trauma [5, 6, 7]
	MUTUAL-SUPPORT FELLOWSHIP	Start intensive participation in mutual-support activities. Complete steps 1–3 (decision steps) and 4–9 (action steps). [8-9]
	SPIRITUALITY	Your brain is too foggy for much spiritual growth. Focus on acceptance, preparation.
	LIVING SOBER AND PREVENTING RELAPSE	Learn about cues and triggers that can lead to relapse. Develop a plan to deal with cravings. Your living environment is structured enough to keep your focus on recovery. [10]
LIFE PLAN	RELATIONSHIPS	Put relationships on hold and work on yourself. Lay the groundwork for later repairs. [11]
	RECREATION AND SOBER SOCIALIZING	Recreation and socializing are low priorities. Learn how to socialize sober. [11]
	EDUCATION, CAREER, FINANCES	Put education, career, and finances on hold as much as possible. Learn to handle work stress. [12]
HEALTH PLAN	PHYSICAL HEALTH	Focus on survival. Take care of immediate needs. Learn about the risks of drugs in health care. [13]
	DIET	Eat to avoid relapse and relieve cravings. [13]
	EXERCISE	Do some exercise, but be sure it is not goal-oriented or isolating. [13]
	MENTAL HEALTH	Symptoms may be due to addiction. Unless they are life-threatening, usually the best approach is to continue your focus on recovery. [14]

YELLOW ZONE

Proceed with caution. Build your life.

Maintain your foundation of sobriety and strong recovery. Build your new life.

[Chapters 16-20]

1.5–3 years in recovery to 4–6 years.

- Do you have a strong and stable recovery? Has the fog lifted?
- Have you completed initial treatment? Do you have a relapse prevention plan?
- Are you still involved in a recovery fellowship? Have you completed steps 1–9? Are you ready to start steps 10–12?
- Have you seen the promises of the *Big Book* come true?
- Are you ready to rebuild your life? **[16]**

Professional treatment, if any, should focus on growth in relationships, career, and emotions, and healthy living practices.

[16-17]

Continue mutual-support activities. If you want to cut back, talk to your sponsor. Welcome leadership and service opportunities. Start steps 10–12 (maintenance). **[16-17]**

Develop and practice spiritual attitudes and activities. **[16-17]**

Continue to be watchful of cues and triggers. Review your plan for cravings often. Do Recovery Zone ReChecks regularly. Your living environment is supportive of your personal goals. **[16-17]**

Rebuild or start new relationships with your partner, family, friends, and others. **[18]**

Explore recreational and social activities. **[18]**

Build or rebuild your education, career, and finances. **[19]**

Stabilize your health. Find a primary care provider and address neglected issues. Avoid all mood-altering medications. **[20]**

Learn about nutrition and improve your diet. **[20]**

Find forms of exercise you enjoy. **[20]**

Focus on quality of life issues. **[20]**

GREEN ZONE

Go. Celebrate your life.

Live a long, healthy, sober life. Help others find recovery.

[Chapters 21-25]

4–6 years to the end of your life.

- Do you have a strong and stable recovery, and a fulfilled and content life?
- Are you still involved in a recovery fellowship? Have you completed steps 1–12?
- Have you rebuilt your life (relationships, recreation, education, career, finances)?
- Have you restored your health?
- Are you ready to help others find recovery? **[21]**

Maintain a relationship with a professional for help as needed. **[21-22]**

With your sponsor, find your best level of participation. Continue to practice step 12. Make sponsoring, service, and leadership priorities. **[21-22]**

Be available to guide others. **[21-22]**

Continue to be watchful of cues and triggers. Review your plan to deal with cravings often. Do Recovery Zone ReChecks regularly. You are strong enough to live wherever you want. **[21-22]**

Relationships should be healed, content, and growing. Address and prevent addiction in your extended family. **[21, 22, 23]**

Participate regularly in recreational and social activities. **[21-22]**

Career and finances should be stable. **[21-22]**

Achieve your best health. Focus on preventive care. Avoid all mood-altering medications. **[24-25]**

Establish good dietary habits. **[24]**

Set and meet exercise goals. **[24]**

Focus on quality of life issues. **[24]**

The Recovery Book: Table of Contents & Chapter Highlights

1. Welcome to Recovery

Who Needs Recovery? ▪ What is Addiction? What is Alcoholism? ▪ Are You an Alcoholic or Addict? ▪ Is Drinking Damaging Your Body Already?

Moving into Recovery ▪ How Did This Happen to My Brain? ▪ Your Brain in Addiction ▪ Your Brain in Recovery ▪ Heal Your Brain with TAMERS

2. Your Recovery Plan

The Key Elements of Your Recovery Plan: Commit to Sobriety, Get Active in a Mutual-Support Fellowship, Be Patient and Let Your Body and Brain Heal, Follow the Recovery Zone System

The Recovery Zone System: How it Works (Red Zone: Stop, Activate Your Recovery; Yellow Zone: Proceed with Caution, Build Your Life; Green Zone: Go. Celebrate Your Life), Recovery Zone ReCheck

~ The Red Zone ~

3. Stop: Activate Your Recovery

Are You Ready for the Red Zone?

Your Recovery Program in the Red Zone: Recovery Treatment; Mutual-Support Fellowship and Spirituality; Living Sober and Preventing Relapse; Relationships, Recreation, and Sober Socializing; Education, Career, and Finances; Physical Health, Diet, and Exercise; Mental Health

Your Brain in the Red Zone: Recovery Treatment; Mutual-Support Fellowship; Living Sober and Preventing Relapse; Relationships, Recreation, and Sober Socializing, Education, Career, and Finances; Physical and Mental Health

4. Committing to Recovery

I Don't Think I Have a Problem ▪ It's Not My Fault ▪ It's Too Hard to Quit ▪ I'm Not Ready ▪ There's No One There Like Me ▪ OK, I'll Go—But What Do I Tell Everyone? ▪ I'm Still Wary About Living Sober

5. The Many Roads to a Lifetime of Sobriety

You Have Many Options ▪ It All Starts With Detox ▪ Quitting on Your Own ▪ Alcoholics Anonymous and Other 12-Step Fellowships ▪ Other Mutual Support Groups ▪ Outpatient Treatment ▪ Help from a Sober Companion ▪ Inpatient Treatment ▪ Recovery Residences ▪ What About Therapy? ▪ What About Pharmaceutical Therapy? ▪ How to Find Treatment ▪ Who Will Mind the Kids? ▪ Treatment Confidentiality ▪ Paying for Treatment

6. A Closer Look: Detox and Withdrawal

Before You Get Started ▪ A Guide to Detox and Withdrawal ▪ If You Detox at Home ▪ Detox and Withdrawal Scenarios: Alcohol; Other Central Nervous System Depressants; Cocaine, Crack, Methamphetamine, and Other Stimulants; Opiates/Narcotics; Marijuana and Other Hallucinogens; Antidepressants and Antipsychotics ▪ You Can Make it Through Detox ▪ Suicide Prevention and Crisis Intervention Lifelines

7. A Closer Look: Inpatient Treatment

Should I Consider Inpatient Treatment? ▪ What Happens in Inpatient Treatment? ▪ Leaving Treatment ▪ The Recovery Zone System Continuing Care Plan

8. A Closer Look: AA and Other 12-Step Fellowships

A Beginner's Guide to AA and Other Fellowships ▪ Starting Your Fellowship-Based Program ▪ More Ideas for Working Your Program ▪ All About Sponsors

9. A Closer Look: Twelve-Step Programs and You

Common Issues of AA Beginners ▪ More About Spirituality and Religion ▪ Everyone is Welcome at 12-Step Fellowships

10. First Steps: Living in Sobriety and Preventing Relapse

Moving into Your Lifetime of Sobriety ▪ Sober-Living Homes and Sober Helpers ▪ Avoid a Relapse—Resist Temptation ▪ Avoid a Relapse—Deal with Cravings and Compulsions ▪ I Thought I Would Be Happy by Now ▪ Clean Up Your Online Life ▪ What If I Slip?

11. First Steps: Relationships, Recreation, and Socializing in the Red Zone

Rebuilding Relationships ▪ Repairing the Family ▪ Issues with Your Partner ▪ Sexual Intimacy ▪ What About a New Relationship? ▪ Sober Socializing

12. First Steps: Education, Work, and Finances in the Red Zone

Your Professional Life ▪ Getting Back into a Work Routine ▪ Legal and Financial Troubles

13. Your Physical Health in the Red Zone

Your Health Priorities Now ▪ Calling Dr. Google: How to Find Good Health Information ▪ Medication Concerns ▪ A Healthy Lifestyle ▪ The Clean and Sober Diet for the Red Zone ▪ Should I Exercise Now? ▪ Common Health Issues in Early Recovery

14. Your Mental Health in the Red Zone

Common Lingering Symptoms ▪ Mental Health and Emotional Issues ▪ Getting Healthy

15. For Teens and Young Adults in Recovery

Are You Ready to Change? ▪ Fitting in When You're In Recovery ▪ Working Things Out

~ The Yellow Zone ~

16. Proceed with Caution: Build Your Life

Are You Ready for the Yellow Zone? ▪ Living Your Life, Healing Your Brain ▪ Recovery Zone ReCheck

17. Your Recovery Program in the Yellow Zone

Keep Working Your Program ▪ Reach Out to Help Others Now ▪ How to Be a Good Sponsor ▪ Common Issues in the Yellow Zone ▪ Heading Off a Relapse ▪ If You Relapse

18. Rebuilding Your Life: Relationships, Recreation, and Socializing in the Yellow Zone

Is It Time to Make Changes? ▪ Renewing Relationships ▪ Rebuilding Family Ties ▪ Common Relationship Issues ▪ Having Fun Again ▪ Finding a New Relationship

19. Rebuilding Your Life: Education, Work, and Finances in the Yellow Zone

Are You Ready to Make Career Changes? ▪ Fixing Finances

20. Your Health in the Yellow Zone

Your Health Priorities Now ▪ Medication Concerns ▪ A Healthy Lifestyle ▪ Clean and Sober Diet for the Yellow Zone ▪ Exercise ▪ Mental Health

~ The Green Zone ~

21. Go: Celebrate Your Life

Are You Ready for the Green Zone? ▪ Living Your Life, Healing Your Brain ▪ Recovery Zone ReCheck

22. Your Recovery Program in the Green Zone

Sticking with Recovery ▪ Keep Helping Others—It Helps You Too ▪ Be a Recovery Activist

23. Raising Substance-Free Kids

All Kids Are at Risk for Addiction ▪ How to Addiction-Proof Your Child ▪ Protect Your Kids Online

24. Your Health in the Green Zone

Your Health Priorities Now ▪ Medication Concerns ▪ Your Healthy Lifestyle: The Clean and Sober Diet ▪ Exercise ▪ Nondrug Approaches to Common Medical Problems

25. Time to Quit Smoking

On Your Mark: Deciding to Quit ▪ Get Set: Preparing to Kick the Habit ▪ Go: Quit Day

26. For Family and Friends

How Addiction and Alcoholism Affect Relationships ▪ Getting Help for Your Loved One ▪ Should We Do an Intervention? ▪ If They Won't Stop ▪ When Your Child Is in Trouble ▪ Treatment for Teens ▪ Understanding the Zones of Recovery—And Your Role in Each ▪ Your Concerns, Actions, and Emotions ▪ Al-Anon and Other Support Fellowships ▪ Rebuilding Your Family—Or Not ▪ Relapse