

The Recovery Zone System

The Recovery Book

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THE RECOVERY ZONES	Red Zone	Yellow Zone	Green Zone
<p>Focus in This Zone</p> <p>Zone Guides</p>	<p>Stop. Activate your recovery.</p> <p>Stop everything you are doing and save your life. Focus entirely on survival and your recovery.</p> <p>Always ask yourself: "Is this activity necessary to avoid relapse and save my life?" If not, save it for later.</p>	<p>Proceed with caution. Build your life.</p> <p>Maintain a foundation of sobriety and strong recovery, but also rebuild your life.</p> <p>Your life is more flexible now, not focused solely on recovery.</p> <p>Now it's time to make your life what you want it to be – more than you once thought possible. Focus on rebuilding or restarting your:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships and family life • Education, career, finances • Recreational activities <p>Start to stabilize your physical health and mental health. Work on self-care.</p>	<p>Go. Celebrate your life.</p> <p>Live your life. Enjoy the life you have saved and rebuilt.</p> <p>Prolong your life. Do what you can to live as long as possible, through better diet, regular exercise, and preventive health practices.</p> <p>Help other people get into recovery. Be an example to others.</p> <p>Be an agent for positive change in how addiction is perceived in society and your community.</p> <p>You are always watchful for when you may need to retreat to an earlier Recovery Zone.</p>

Part 1. YOUR COMMITMENT TO RECOVERY	Red Zone	Yellow Zone	Green Zone
<i>Your Recovery Timeline</i>	From your first commitment to getting sober, to 1.5-3 years sober and in recovery.	From 1.5-3 years in recovery to about 4-6 years in recovery.	From 4-6 years in recovery to the end of your life.
<i>Are You Ready for this Recovery Zone?</i>	<p>You are ready for the Red Zone when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have an honest and persistent desire to stop drinking or using drugs • You are ready to save your life • You are ready to focus exclusively on recovery and put other parts of your life on hold 	<p>You are ready for the Yellow Zone when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have a stable and strong recovery, are drug free, and the drug fog has lifted • You have successfully completed an initial treatment plan • You are actively involved in a support fellowship and have completed Steps 1-3, the decision steps, and 4-9, the action steps • You believe you are ready for Steps 10-12, the maintenance steps • You believe your recovery is strong enough that you can now start to look at other areas of your life and your goals, and move forward to rebuild your life • You have seen the promises of the Big Book come true 	<p>You are ready for the Green Zone when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have a fulfilled and content life • You have worked through the 12 Steps • You are ready to help others experience recovery • You have rebuilt your life with regard to relationships, education, career, finances, recreation • You have restored your health and are ready to do what you can to achieve your best health, prolong your life and live your life to its fullest • You are not dealing with any destabilizing recovery issues (which might prompt a return to the Red Zone) • You do not need to work on any personal life fulfillment issues (which might prompt a return to the Yellow Zone)

<p>Part 2. YOUR RECOVERY ACTIVITIES <i>(Professional Treatment, Mutual Support Fellowship, Living Sober, Relapse Prevention)</i></p>	<p>Red Zone</p>	<p>Yellow Zone</p>	<p>Green Zone</p>
<p>Recovery Treatment</p>	<p>Develop and enter into a plan for professional recovery treatment, if needed, possibly including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detox • Inpatient treatment • Outpatient treatment • Professional guidance to address issues (such as anxiety, depression, and early trauma) that may keep you from getting the full benefit of recovery resources <p>Medication may be used to help you get started on your recovery. It may also be used (rarely) to treat psychosis, if keeping you from getting involved in recovery support.</p>	<p>Your professional treatment, if any, is now focused on reducing the barriers to growth in areas such as relationships, career counseling, emotional health, and healthy living practices.</p> <p>Medication is used only to treat illness. Try to avoid all that may alter mood or reality, such as sleep aids, antidepressants, and antianxiety drugs.</p>	<p>Maintain a relationship with a professional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For help as needed with growth issues and communication • To gain skills that may be helpful in spreading recovery attitudes and practices <p>Medication is used only to treat illness. Avoid all that may alter mood or reality, such as sleep aids, antidepressants, and antianxiety drugs.</p>
<p>Mutual Support Fellowship</p>	<p>Get started with regular and intensive participation in mutual-support activities. Let someone else guide you through the process.</p> <p>Start working on the 12 steps. Consider them a recipe for the Red Zone. While you are in the mental fog of early recovery, they will show you what to do.</p> <p>Complete Steps 1-3 (the decision steps) and 4-9 (the action steps).</p>	<p>Continue with regular, structured participation in mutual-support activities. If you want to change your level of participation, confer with your sponsor or mentor.</p> <p>Welcome leadership and service opportunities. Start sponsoring others.</p> <p>Start Steps 10, 11, and 12. (maintenance steps).</p>	<p>Find your own best level of participation, in collaboration with your sponsor or mentor.</p> <p>Set an example of recovery for others. Sponsor others and help them work the 12 Steps.</p> <p>Make sponsorships, mentoring, service and leadership priorities in your life.</p> <p>Help others to expand access to recovery resources and interventions.</p> <p>Continue to practice Step 12.</p>

<p><i>Living Sober</i></p>	<p>Your living environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured enough to keep your focus on recovery • A place where people give you constant feedback and support in your efforts to stay abstinent and get involved in recovery practices • A place where people know how to get rid of anything that is a barrier to recovery, to create a safe nurturing atmosphere for healing 	<p>Your living environment must be flexible and supportive of achieving personal goals.</p>	<p>You are free to live wherever you want.</p>
<p><i>Relapse Prevention</i></p>	<p>Relapse Prevention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the cues and triggers that could lead to a relapse. • Develop a plan to deal with cravings. • Learn how to do a Zone ReCheck and make a plan for how often you will do it. 	<p>Relapse Prevention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to be watchful of cues and triggers that could lead to relapse. • Review your plan to deal with cravings. • Conduct regular Zone ReChecks to anticipate and deal with potentially triggering events. 	<p>Relapse Prevention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to be watchful of cues and triggers that could lead to relapse. • Review your plan to deal with cravings. • Conduct regular Zone ReChecks to anticipate and deal with potentially triggering events.

<p>Part 3. YOUR LIFE PLAN <i>(Relationships; Education, Career, Finances; Recreation)</i></p>	<p>Red Zone</p>	<p>Yellow Zone</p>	<p>Green Zone</p>
<p>Relationships</p>	<p>Put your relationships on hold while you focus solely on recovery. Work on yourself.</p>	<p>You can now start or rebuild relationships with a partner, family, friends, co-workers, and others in your community.</p>	<p>Your relationships are stable, healed, content, and growing. Learn what you can do to prevent addiction in your members of your family.</p>
<p>Education, Career, Finances</p>	<p>Put your education, career and financial decisions and moves on hold while you focus solely on recovery. It's best to work at a low stress job, if you need to work. Recovery <i>is</i> your work. (You can accept a promotion in your current job as long as it don't shift your focus from recovery work.) (While doing a self-inventory you might uncover new areas of career or educational interests. You can explore them later.)</p>	<p>You can now start to build or rebuild your education, career and finances.</p>	<p>Your education, career and finances are stable. Focus now on your mature work ethic and workplace collaboration. Advance in your career on merit.</p>
<p>Recreation</p>	<p>Your recreational activities and hobbies need to be low priorities while you focus on recovery. (Those seen as pleasurable can be relapse triggers.)</p>	<p>Take time now to explore recreational activities. Find activities that give you pleasure.</p>	<p>Participate regularly in recreational activities and hobbies that give you pleasure.</p>

<p>Part 4.</p> <p>YOUR</p> <p>HEALTH</p> <p>PLAN</p> <p><i>(Physical Health, Diet, Exercise, Mental Health, Spirituality)</i></p>	<p>Red Zone</p>	<p>Yellow Zone</p>	<p>Green Zone</p>
<p>Physical Health</p>	<p>Focus on survival. Take care of immediate health needs.</p> <p>If you need it, get reassurance from professionals that you will survive.</p>	<p>Stabilize your physical health.</p> <p>Focus on repair: address health issues you've neglected, as well as any damage caused by your addiction.</p> <p>Develop a relationship with a primary care provider.</p> <p>Set goals for physical health, such as weight management and physical conditioning.</p>	<p>Achieve your best health, and thrive for the rest of your life.</p> <p>Focus on prevention and screening.</p> <p>Take care of preventive healthcare needs, such as immunizations and screening exams.</p> <p>Let your doctor know you are in recovery, and offer to talk with others who he believes are at risk for addiction.</p>
<p>Diet</p>	<p>Worry about your diet later. For now, eat to avoid relapse and relieve craving. Follow the 7 basic rules.</p>	<p>Start learning about good nutrition and improve your diet.</p>	<p>Establish lifelong habits for healthy nutrition and a diet that will extend your life.</p>
<p>Exercise</p>	<p>Do not focus strongly on exercise. Do some exercise, but be sure it is not goal oriented. Use exercise as a way to get to meetings, follow your program, and build connections with others in recovery. Avoid exercise routines that isolate you or act as a substitute for recovery activity.</p>	<p>Explore forms of exercise that you might find enjoyable. Find some that can help you achieve your health goals.</p>	<p>Make your exercise routines more goal oriented: focus on weight, calorie burn, cardiac and physical conditioning goals. Set and meet time goals for regular exercise.</p>

<p><i>Mental Health</i></p>	<p>Any symptoms you have may be due to addiction damage. Unless they are life-threatening, your best approach is continue your focus on recovery activities.</p> <p>Your mental health care should be focused on reducing barriers to a successful recovery.</p>	<p>Your mental health care now should focus on quality of life issues.</p>	<p>Collaborative.</p>
<p><i>Spirituality</i></p>	<p>Your brain not yet detoxed enough to work on spirituality. Focus on acceptance and preparation.</p>	<p>As your brain clears and you progress in recovery, develop and practice spiritual attitudes and activities that work for you.</p>	<p>Be an example to others. Be available to guide others to a more fully developed spirituality.</p>

ZONE RECAP: YOUR GOALS	Red Zone	Yellow Zone	Green Zone
<p><i>Have You Met the Goals for This Zone?</i></p> <p><i>Are You Ready to Move Forward?</i></p>	<p>You can move on from the Red Zone when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have been clean and sober for at least one year • You have spent that time focusing solely on recovery & saving your life • The brain fog of drugs and alcohol has lifted • You have found and completed an initial treatment plan that worked for you • You have gotten involved in a mutual support fellowship and have developed a good relationship with a sponsor • You have completed Steps 1-3, the decision steps, and 4-9, the action steps • You are ready for Steps 10-12 (maintenance) • You have a stable living situation that supports your recovery activities • You have learned about triggers that could lead to relapse, and have a plan to deal with them • You managed to put other parts of your life on hold (relationships, education, career, etc.), but now feel ready to explore those areas and rebuild your life • Your physical and mental health has stabilized • Your life in recovery is fully established and you have seen the promises of the Big Book come true. 	<p>You can move on from the Yellow Zone when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have been clean and sober for at least 4 years • You have a strong and stable recovery • You have completed professional treatment • You are actively involved in a mutual support fellowship, have completed Steps 1-12, and welcome opportunities to help others • You have met your goals for relationships and family life • You have met your goals for education, career, finances • You have met your goals for recreational activities • You have established a basic level of self-care • You have learned more about how to achieve a healthy lifestyle through better nutrition and exercise • You have set goals for your physical condition, and have started to work toward them • Your mental health is stable • You are ready to do what's needed to prolong your life • You regularly assess where you are and your risk of relapse by doing a Recovery Zone ReCheck 	<p>You will stay in the Green Zone for the rest of your life. Check regularly to make sure you <i>continue</i> to meet the Green Zone goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have a strong and stable recovery and remain clean and sober • You have no desire to drink or use drugs • You remain active in a mutual support fellowship • You have completed all of the 12 steps, and return to them as needed • You welcome leadership and service opportunities • Your relationships, career, finances, and recreational activities are all stable, content and fulfilling • You take care of preventive health issues regularly • You have established healthy living habits (diet and exercise) and are working toward meeting physical health goals • Your mental health is stable • You regularly assess where you are and your risk of relapse by doing a Recovery Zone ReCheck

