

CRAVING TRACKER

Notice the Pattern. Ride the Urge. Choose Your Next Action.

A craving can feel urgent without requiring an immediate response.

The purpose of this tracker is not to judge yourself for having a craving. It is to help you understand:

What triggered it.

What you were thinking and feeling.

How strong it became.

How you responded.

What helped.

Over time, tracking cravings can help you recognize patterns and prepare healthier responses before difficult moments happen.

TODAY'S CRAVING

DATE:

TIME:

WHERE WAS I?

WHO WAS I WITH?

1 — WHAT HAPPENED RIGHT BEFORE THE CRAVING?

Describe the situation.

Was there an obvious trigger?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I'm not sure

THE TRIGGER MAY HAVE BEEN:

- ☐ Stress
- ☐ Anger
- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Loneliness
- ☐ Boredom
- ☐ Rejection
- ☐ Shame
- ☐ Sadness
- ☐ Relationship conflict
- ☐ Family conflict
- ☐ Work stress
- ☐ Financial stress
- ☐ Seeing someone use
- ☐ Being around substances
- ☐ Seeing something on social media
- ☐ A person from my past
- ☐ A certain place
- ☐ A memory
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Celebration

- ☐ Having access to money
 - ☐ Being alone
 - ☐ Pain
 - ☐ Poor sleep
 - ☐ Other: _____
-

2 — CHECK YOUR BODY FIRST

Before analyzing everything, check your basic needs.

H.A.L.T.

H — HUNGRY

☐ Yes ☐ No

A — ANGRY

☐ Yes ☐ No

L — LONELY

☐ Yes ☐ No

T — TIRED

☐ Yes ☐ No

Something else my body may need:

3 — WHAT WAS I THINKING?

Write down the thought that appeared with the craving.

Examples:

"I need something to relax."

"I can't deal with this."

"One time won't matter."

"I deserve it."

"I'll start over tomorrow."

"Nobody will know."

"I've already messed up."

"I just want this feeling to stop."

MY AUTOMATIC THOUGHT WAS:

4 — WHAT WAS I FEELING?

Check everything that applies.

- ☐ Angry
- ☐ Anxious
- ☐ Afraid
- ☐ Lonely
- ☐ Sad
- ☐ Rejected
- ☐ Ashamed
- ☐ Guilty
- ☐ Bored
- ☐ Frustrated
- ☐ Overwhelmed
- ☐ Excited
- ☐ Restless

☐ Numb

☐ Other: _____

THE STRONGEST EMOTION:

EMOTION INTENSITY:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5 — RATE THE CRAVING

WHEN I FIRST NOTICED IT:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 = Very mild

10 = Extremely intense

AT ITS STRONGEST:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HOW LONG DID THE STRONGEST PART LAST?

☐ Less than 5 minutes

☐ 5–15 minutes

☐ 15–30 minutes

☐ 30–60 minutes

☐ More than 1 hour

☐ I'm not sure

6 — WHAT DID THE CRAVING FEEL LIKE IN MY BODY?

☐ Restlessness

☐ Racing heart

☐ Tight chest

- ☐ Muscle tension
- ☐ Shaking
- ☐ Sweating
- ☐ Stomach sensation
- ☐ Trouble concentrating
- ☐ Feeling agitated
- ☐ Feeling physically uncomfortable
- ☐ Feeling energized
- ☐ Feeling numb
- ☐ Other: _____

THE FIRST PHYSICAL WARNING SIGN I NOTICED:

7 — WHAT DID I FEEL LIKE DOING?

My immediate urge was to:

I WANTED TO:

- ☐ Use a substance
- ☐ Contact someone associated with past use
- ☐ Go somewhere associated with past use
- ☐ Isolate
- ☐ Leave the situation
- ☐ Argue
- ☐ Shut down
- ☐ Distract myself

- ☐ Engage in another unhealthy behavior
 - ☐ Other: _____
-

8 — PAUSE BEFORE RESPONDING

Don't solve the rest of your life right now.

Focus on the next few minutes.

Ask:

WHAT AM I FEELING?

WHAT TRIGGERED THIS?

WHAT AM I TELLING MYSELF?

WHAT DO I FEEL LIKE DOING?

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I FOLLOW THAT URGE?

WHAT IS ONE HEALTHIER THING I CAN DO NEXT?

9 — MY CRAVING TOOLBOX

Choose something to try before acting on the craving.

- ☐ Wait 10 minutes
- ☐ Call someone
- ☐ Text someone supportive
- ☐ Attend a recovery meeting

- ☐ Leave the triggering environment
- ☐ Walk
- ☐ Exercise
- ☐ Drink water
- ☐ Eat something
- ☐ Take a shower
- ☐ Practice slow breathing
- ☐ Journal
- ☐ Pray
- ☐ Meditate
- ☐ Listen to music
- ☐ Use grounding techniques
- ☐ Challenge the thought
- ☐ Do something with my hands
- ☐ Go somewhere safe
- ☐ Contact my counselor
- ☐ Contact my sponsor/peer-support person
- ☐ Other: _____

WHAT I CHOSE:

10 — URGE SURFING

Instead of fighting the craving, imagine it like a wave.

It begins.

It rises.

It may become uncomfortable.

It reaches a peak.

And it can change.

Your job is not necessarily to make the wave disappear.

Your job is to avoid automatically acting on it while it passes.

RIGHT NOW MY CRAVING IS:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Wait several minutes.

Breathe.

Observe.

Do not judge the feeling.

NOW MY CRAVING IS:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

WHAT CHANGED?

11 — WHAT DID I ACTUALLY DO?

DID I USE A HEALTHY COPING STRATEGY?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Partially

DID I REACH OUT TO SOMEONE?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

DID I CHANGE MY ENVIRONMENT?

☐ Yes

☐ No

12 — RATE THE CRAVING AGAIN

After using my coping strategy:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

WHAT HELPED THE MOST?

WHAT DIDN'T HELP?

13 — WHAT DID I LEARN?

The trigger was:

My automatic thought was:

My strongest emotion was:

My first physical warning sign was:

My usual urge was:

What helped:

Next time I will:

MY 7-DAY CRAVING LOG

Day	Trigger	Emotion	Peak 1–10	What I Did	After 1–10
1	_____ _____	_____	____	_____	____
2	_____ _____	_____	____	_____	____
3	_____ _____	_____	____	_____	____
4	_____ _____	_____	____	_____	____
5	_____ _____	_____	____	_____	____
6	_____ _____	_____	____	_____	____
7	_____ _____	_____	____	_____	____

WEEKLY PATTERN REVIEW

After seven days, look at the tracker as data—not as a judgment of yourself.

WHAT TIME OF DAY WERE MY CRAVINGS STRONGEST?

WHAT WERE MY MOST COMMON TRIGGERS?

1.

2.

3.

WHAT EMOTIONS APPEARED MOST OFTEN?

WHICH PEOPLE OR PLACES APPEARED REPEATEDLY?

WAS HUNGER, ANGER, LONELINESS, OR FATIGUE A PATTERN?

WHICH COPING STRATEGY WORKED BEST?

WHAT SHOULD I PREPARE FOR NEXT WEEK?

BUILD YOUR PERSONAL CRAVING PLAN

Complete this before you need it.

WHEN I NOTICE:

I KNOW THIS MAY BE A WARNING SIGN FOR:

MY FIRST ACTION WILL BE:

MY SECOND ACTION WILL BE:

THE PERSON I WILL CONTACT IS:

THE SAFE PLACE I CAN GO IS:

ONE REASON I DON'T WANT TO ACT ON THIS CRAVING:

THE 10-MINUTE PLAN

When a craving feels overwhelming, don't promise yourself forever.

Start with ten minutes.

FOR THE NEXT 10 MINUTES:

1. Don't make the decision yet.
2. Change your environment if possible.
3. Take several slow breaths.
4. Contact someone supportive.
5. Do one physical activity.
6. Read your reason for recovery.

Then reassess.

CRAVING BEFORE:

___ / 10

CRAVING AFTER:

___ / 10

If it remains intense, repeat the process and involve additional recovery or professional support.

REMEMBER

A craving is an experience—not a command.

You don't have to argue with it.

You don't have to be ashamed of it.

You don't have to make it disappear immediately.

Notice it.

Name it.

Track it.

Create space.

Use your tools.

Reach out.

Choose the next healthy action.

TRIGGER → THOUGHT → FEELING → CRAVING → PAUSE → CHOICE

Every time you interrupt an automatic pattern, you practice a different response.

CENSOZO | MINDSTRONG

Supporting the Person. Supporting the Journey.

Use this resource alongside the:

Trigger Identification Worksheet

CBT Triangle Worksheet

30-Day Recovery Calendar

Family Coming Home From Rehab Guide

and the **MindStrong Workbook** for additional exercises focused on thoughts, emotions, behaviors, triggers, and coping strategies.

IMPORTANT

This tracker is an educational and personal-development resource. It is not medical advice and is not a substitute for professional substance-use treatment, psychotherapy, detoxification, or medical care.

Some forms of substance withdrawal—including withdrawal from alcohol and benzodiazepines—can be medically dangerous or life-threatening. Seek appropriate medical guidance rather than attempting to manage potentially dangerous withdrawal with self-help tools.

If you are experiencing a mental health or substance-use crisis in the United States, call or text **988**. For treatment information and referrals, contact **SAMHSA's National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357)**. For a medical emergency, call **911**.