

## Pornography Recovery Kit

Stage	Tasks
<b>Stage 1: Create a relapse prevention plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Assessment</li> <li>○ Limiting access plan</li> <li>○ Understanding your triggers</li> <li>○ Relapse prevention plan</li> <li>○ STI test (if applicable)</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 2: Understand pornography addiction and connect to community support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Read a book from list</li> <li>○ View the recommended videos</li> <li>○ Access an online community</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 3: Manage cravings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Coping with Cravings handout</li> <li>○ Understand the cycle of addiction</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 4: Support your partner</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Answer your partner's questions</li> <li>○ Understand your partner's experience</li> <li>○ Begin to build trust</li> </ul>
<b>Stage: Later-stage recovery issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identify and address later-stage recovery issues</li> <li>○ Understand the path of long-term recovery</li> </ul>

## Assessment<sup>1</sup>

Question	Notes	
How many times do you view internet pornography per week?	Times/week: _____  Masturbation: _____	Duration:
What are the main categories or genres that you view?		
How often do you have sex with your spouse (or others)?		
Have you had unsuccessful attempts at quitting pornography in the past?	Yes / No	
Have you experienced a lack of productivity due to pornography use?	Yes / No	
Do you struggle with viewing others as sexual objects?	Yes / No	
Do you experience cravings when going without pornography?	Yes / No	
Do you have intrusive thoughts about pornography?	Yes / No	
Have you begun to question your sexual orientation since you began using pornography?	Yes/ No	
Can you masturbate to climax <i>without</i> pornography ?	Yes / No	
Have you escalated to pornography genres that you find disturbing?	Yes / No	

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the [Sexual Dependency Inventory](#) and [Your Brain on Porn website](#)

<b>If you have a partner:</b>	
Is your partner aware that you view porn? If so, do they know how often?	Yes / No
Have you become <i>less</i> interested in sexual contact with your partner since viewing pornography?	
Do you have problems maintaining an erection when having sex with a partner?	Yes / No
Do you feel fantasize about sexual images during sexual contact with your partner?	Yes / No
Have you asked your partner to engage in sexual acts influenced by what you see online?	Yes / No

## Limiting Access Plan

<b>Individual tasks:</b>	<b>If you have a partner:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Install an internet filter (see list below)</li> <li>○ Delete accounts and block associated phone numbers</li> <li>○ Create boundaries for accessing devices (e.g., no use after 8pm)</li> <li>○ Do not take your phone the bathroom</li> <li>○ Consider using a <a href="#">locking container</a> to limit access</li> <li>○ Tell someone about your plan to keep yourself accountable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Give your partner complete access to devices, including passwords</li> <li>○ Do not take phone in the bathroom and have it in plain sight at all times</li> <li>○ Do not delete any suspicious messages or text threads without showing them to your partner first</li> <li>○ Disclose any setbacks or suspicious behavior immediately to your partner (within 24 hours)</li> <li>○ Agree to install a location tracker on your phone and be willing to take selfies to confirm your location</li> </ul>

## Understanding Your Triggers

**Trigger** = A specific cue that causes addictive thoughts and cravings.  
 The most common triggers involve people, places, and things.

<b>Triggers</b>	<b>Types of unhealthy thinking patterns:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Noticing attractive people</li> <li>○ Sexual images on the internet</li> <li>○ Sex scenes on streaming sites or TV</li> <li>○ Times of the day (evening)</li> <li>○ Substances (alcohol, cannabis)</li> <li>○ Stress</li> <li>○ Sleep troubles</li> <li>○ Social media (Instagram)</li> <li>○ Websites (reddit)</li> <li>○ Locations</li> <li>○ Boredom</li> <li>○ Loneliness</li> <li>○ Anxiety</li> <li>○ Anger</li> <li>○ Excitement</li> <li>○ Rejection</li> <li>○ Disappointment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Permission giving</b> <i>(I'll just look at it for a few minutes)</i></li> <li>○ <b>Comparison</b> <i>(At least I'm not as bad as...)</i></li> <li>○ <b>Blaming</b> <i>(I wouldn't look at porn if my wife had sex with me)</i></li> <li>○ <b>Rationalization</b> <i>(All men look at porn)</i></li> <li>○ <b>Denial</b> <i>(No one was hurt)</i></li> <li>○ <b>Entitlement</b> <i>(I work so hard, I deserve a reward)</i></li> <li>○ <b>Fixed mindset</b> <i>(This is too hard; I am not able to change)</i></li> </ul>

## Relapse Prevention Plan<sup>2</sup>

The following behaviors are off limits:	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Coping strategies for triggers:	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Healthy thoughts I can practice:	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Healthy habits I will start to develop:	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
If I have a setback, I will:	<input type="radio"/> Tell my partner within 24 hours <input type="radio"/> Access support <input type="radio"/>
I have decided to take a pause from sexual activity to better understand my relationship to pornography: (Yes / No)	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Length of time: _____	

<sup>2</sup> This plan is inspired by the 3 circles plan from [Sex Addicts Anonymous](#)

(please share freely).

**Overall Tips for Relapse Prevention**

- Limit access to pornography to conserve your willpower and decrease overall cravings
- Understand your triggers and have a plan to manage them
- Track your days of recovery
- Finding creative outlets such as writing and art can be helpful

**Recommended books:**

1. *The Porn Trap* – Wendy Maltz
2. *Your Brain on Porn* – Gary Wilson
3. *Wack* – Noah B.E. Church

**Community and online support:**

<b>Online communities</b>	<b>Apps</b>	<b>Meetings</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Awaken Recovery</li> <li>○ <a href="#">NoFap</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Reboot nation</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Path for men</a> (Kevin Skinner)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">RTRIBE</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">End porn addiction and sexual compulsion</a> (Noah Church)</li> <li>○ <a href="#">Brain buddy</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Fortify</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Sex and porn addicts anonymous</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Sex addicts anonymous</a></li> <li>○ Awaken Recovery (local meetings)</li> <li>○ <a href="#">Sex and relationship healing drop-in group</a></li> </ul>

**Videos on the science of pornography addiction:**

1. [The Great Porn Experiment](#) by Gary Wilson
2. [The Science of Pornography Addiction](#) (AsapScience)
3. [3 Ways Pornography Addiction Rewires the Brain](#) (Alex Lerza)
4. [Raised on a Diet of Internet Porn](#) (Noah Church)

## Coping With Cravings

**Craving** = A powerful desire for something, typically accompanied by a physical urge. Cravings often follow a wave-like pattern that lasts 7-15 minutes.

<p><b>Lifestyle:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Keep yourself occupied during high-risk times with pleasurable activities</li> <li>○ Allow adequate time for breaks and rest in your schedule</li> <li>○ Prioritize sleep, healthy eating, and exercise</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mental strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Try to disengage from the thoughts as quickly as possible. Debating or suppressing the thoughts can intensify the struggle</li> <li>○ Remind yourself that you are free to look at pornography but are <i>choosing</i> not to. This can help diffuse the forbidden aspect</li> <li>○ Visualize the thoughts and cravings and let them float by (mindfulness)</li> <li>○ Visualize yourself successfully living your life without pornography</li> <li>○ Remind yourself of your reasons for quitting</li> <li>○ Remind yourself of the negative consequences of viewing pornography</li> <li>○ Review the successes that you've had (strengths)</li> <li>○ Alert (notice the thoughts), Avert (redirect attention), and Affirm (say something positive to yourself)</li> <li>○ Allowing time to pass while doing something constructive</li> <li>○ Visualize a wise guide or sponsor giving you encouragement</li> </ul>
<p><b>Behavioral strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Practicing <a href="#">focused-attention meditation</a> (concentrating on an anchor point)</li> <li>○ Exercise</li> <li>○ Journaling</li> <li>○ Calling a support person</li> <li>○ Deep breathing</li> <li>○ Prayer</li> <li>○ Change the environment (e.g., change rooms, go for a walk, rearrange the furniture)</li> </ul>	



## Supporting Your Partner

- **Many partners feel betrayed by their partner's pornography use because:**
- You may have withheld information or lied to them
- You made choices to invest your sexual energy outside of the relationship
- This situation creates a lack of trust in the relationship, often described as a betrayal trauma

### **Symptoms of betrayal trauma include:**

- Rapid and intense emotional swings (moving between anger, numbness, tears)
  - Constantly re-living the details and emotions of the betrayal
  - Repeatedly asking questions about the betrayal
  - Becoming upset about seemingly unrelated incidents
  - Questioning their partner's love and commitment (i.e., how could you do this if you loved me?)
  - Monitoring their partner's devices and whereabouts
- 
- It may be difficult to understand why your use of porn has hurt your partner, or why they are behaving in certain ways. Betrayal trauma symptoms are commonly an attempt to establish safety and stability. Partners often feel ashamed of their reactions and telling them that they are overreacting is not helpful. They may show anger but beneath that is deep hurt and pain.

## How to Support Your Partner

Action Items	Tips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Answer questions about your pornography use (without providing graphic sexual details)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In order for your partner to move forward, they need adequate information. Questions such as <i>“How often did you look at porn?”</i> And <i>“Where did you do this?”</i> are valid. However, sexually explicit questions such as <i>“Can you show me the videos you watched?”</i> can exacerbate the partner’s trauma symptoms. In this phase, we recommend completing this process with a qualified couples therapist in order to minimize harm.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Make a commitment to behavior change and maintain momentum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Your partner will be watching your actions to gauge whether they can trust you. Complete the worksheets in this book, access a therapist, and start learning about pornography addiction. Keep the momentum going. Many partners worry that their partner will relapse when they stop their treatment plans.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Understand your triggers, high-risk situations, and check-in with your partner to let them know how you’re progressing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Partners often want to understand why their loved one viewed porn in order to prevent it from happening again. Share what you are learning with your partner. If you need help understanding your behaviours, consult a <a href="#"><i>Certified Sex Addiction Therapist</i></a>. Regular check-ins can also be helpful.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Respond to your partner’s reactions with compassion and non-defensiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It’s natural to feel impatient when your partner asks you the same question repeatedly. When your partner is upset, it’s important to remain calm, and speak simply and slowly with a loving tone. One example: “I can’t erase the pain I’ve caused, but I’m willing to do whatever it takes to win your trust back.” With each non-defensive reaction to your partner’s pain, you will demonstrate that you are committed to the relationship.</li> <li>○ Many partners feel inadequate and that they caused their partner’s sexual behavior. Reassure your partner that your behavior was not a result of their inadequacies, and affirm your commitment to the relationship.</li> <li>○ Move toward your partner when they are upset and ask what they need.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Engage in behaviours that demonstrate your trustworthiness and reliability (e.g., giving your partner access to phone passwords)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Unfortunately, your partner is questioning every action you take right now. Any minor inconstancy will seem connected to the betrayal. Therefore, it is important that you honour your commitments and be completely open and honest about any slips or setbacks.</li> </ul>

## Later-Stage Recovery Issues

Once my clients have established sobriety from pornography, they often turn address later-stage recovery issues, such as:

- **Underlying trauma.** Researchers have found that difficult childhood experiences are associated with a higher incidence of addiction and mental health issues ([see the ACE study](#)). In a study conducted by sex treatment pioneer [Patrick Carnes](#), he found that that 97% of clients had suffered emotional abuse, 83% reported sexual abuse, and 71% reported physical abuse. Unaddressed childhood abuse and neglect can create issues of self-worth, boundaries, emotional regulation, and intimate relationships. adulthood.
- **Relationship issues.** Many of my clients focus on repairing the relationship with their partners, learning how to connect with others, and address issues with their family of origin.
- **Mental health issues.** People with concurrent mental health issues and addictive behaviors can have a more challenging time in recovery (this is called [concurrent disorders](#)). Receiving treatment for issues such as depression, anxiety, and attention deficit disorder is common.
- **Emotional regulation and stress management:** Addictive behavior can be an attempt to manage emotion. Learning how to cope with life without addiction requires new tools and coping strategies.

- **An overall feeling of emptiness or lack of purpose.** Many clients report a sense of emptiness as their recovery requires less effort. In this stage, we will shift the focus of therapy toward developing new goals and establishing purpose and meaning.

Although everyone's treatment plan is unique, this stage typically involves:

- Optimizing lifestyle factors such as diet, exercise, sleep, and stress management
- Utilizing specific therapeutic approaches
- Medical interventions such as medication or supplements
- Learning how to regulate and manage emotion
- Developing skills to be vulnerable, communicate, and set boundaries
- Improving self-worth by addressing negative beliefs

### **Can someone abstain from pornography *without* addressing deeper issues?**

I have seen many clients make lasting changes without ever understanding their deeper psychological issues. However, I do recommend that clients with trauma and mental health issues receive proper treatment, as these issues can cause unnecessary suffering.

### **The Process of Recovery**

The good news is that with effort and time, many of these issues can be effectively treated. The full journey of recovery often involves stopping the addictive behaviour, addressing underlying issues, and developing a healthy and fulfilling life. Although this process can vary widely, [Patrick Carnes](#) found that long-term process of recovery is 3-5 years.

## Additional Resources

Podcasts	Research and education	Internet Filters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Thanks for sharing</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">The addict, the betrayed, and the expert</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Carol the coach</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Sex and relationship healing</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Your brain on porn</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">The truth about porn</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Fight the new drug</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Netsanity</li> <li>○ Mobicip</li> <li>○ Net Nanny</li> <li>○ Xxxchurch</li> <li>○ Covenant Eyes</li> <li>○ Ever Accountable (better for phones)</li> <li>○ <a href="http://www.ippctech.net">http://www.ippctech.net</a></li> <li>○ Qustodio</li> <li>○ <a href="#">Rob Weiss</a>' article about his top picks</li> </ul>

### Additional Reading:

- *Facing the Shadow* – Patrick Carnes
- *Sex Addiction 101* – Robert Weiss
- *Treating Pornography Addiction* Kevin Skinner
- *The Storm of Sex Addiction* - Connie A. Lofgreen
- *For Love and Money* – Debra L. Kaplan
- *Sex Addiction* – Catherine Elliott
- *Lust, Anger, and Love* - Maureen Canning
- *Shadows of the Cross (Christian)* – Craig Cashwell + Penny Johnson
- *When He's Married to Mom* – Kenneth Adams
- *Relationships in Recovery* – Linda Hatch
- *Sexual Anorexia* – Patrick Carnes

### Women's Books:

- *Ready to Heal* – Kelly McDaniel
- *Naked in public* – Staci Sprout
- *No stones* – Marnie C. Feree

(please share freely).