



This lesson is designed to maximize patient engagement and talk time. The focus tasks, small-group sizes, collaborative objectives, and individual work assignments are included strategically to meet this purpose. The timing, number of sessions, and room makeup may be adjusted according to need.

Building Healthy Routines

Building healthy and consistent routines supports SUD recovery and promotes the development of many other recovery coping skills. Exercising regularly, cooking/eating well, and living an active lifestyle increase dopamine naturally, and those who plan to do them are more likely to get them done. Meetings and scheduled check-ins with a sponsor, friend, or supportive family member help build and maintain a recovery support network. Healthy routines also help patients avoid triggers, specifically by allowing them to create a roadmap of what places and situations to avoid, and they reduce the potential for a patient to experience boredom. Planning and organizational skills in general are also often of significant value to individuals in recovery who may be used to a lot of chaos and instability in their lives.

Session Objective:

By the end of this session, participants will demonstrate an understanding of how to develop and maintain healthy routines by creating a personal weekly routine tracking sheet.

Delivery Time: 1 hour

Materials: Notebook paper, writing materials, pre-cut strips of paper or pairs of scissors, clipboards (if no desks/tables are available), [Healthy Habits PDF](#), [Routines Goal Tracking Template PDF](#)

Set-up:

1. If possible, set chairs and desks in a semicircle. If no desks are available; distribute clipboards so participants have a sturdy, portable means of taking notes and competing tasks.
2. If a whiteboard or projector is available, write the session objective;
3. Below the session objective, note the following questions/procedures:
 1. What did your routine look like when you were deep in addiction?
 2. How would you define a healthy habit?

3. How would developing healthy routines support your recovery journey, and why?
and,
4. What are some factors to consider when planning your routine?

Procedure:

1. *Optional* - Video Clip with Focus Task (5 minutes) - Though this clip is humorous because the CEO gets very little actual work done, he schedules numerous health habits throughout the day, including scheduling time to relax. A media player will be required.

Before starting the video, tell participants to write down the CEO's routine as they watch the clip. Then inform participants that they'll be asked after the video to provide their thoughts on both the individual routine items as well as the order of the routine.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oU1Q5ryzo4o>.

While this step is optional, it is recommended as the clip is an excellent way to build interest and engagement in the topic while lowering a participant's anxiety.

2. Session Objective - Read the session's objective aloud.
3. Q1-2 Turn and Talk with Discussion (5 minutes) - Have participants read the questions on the board and take a minute or two to consider their answer. Then participants pair-share their thoughts with the person next to them. Walk around the room, listen, and record any notable responses you hear. After 7 minutes, bring attention back to the whole group.

Creating healthy habits and routines is essential to continuous recovery. After all, the old idiom, idle hands are the devil's workshop, was and is one of life's realities. How often do cravings begin to intensify due to boredom? Very often. Assembling healthy routines in our daily lives will help keep us on track in our recovery and build a sense of accomplishment with each manageable goal we complete.

4. Q3 - Small Group Objective Task (15 minutes) - Now have participants form pairs with a partner, but it cannot be the same partner they just spoke with. Tell participants they are going to create a routine that is valuable for their own recovery as well as others in recovery. Distribute writing materials, blank paper strips, or notebook paper with scissors. Each group should work together to write down healthy routines. (*Even though they are working in pairs, each partner will make their own copy as they will need an individual copy for later activities*).

Encourage participants to consider why the habits they choose are healthy. After the groups have come up with 10 to 15 items, **instruct them to organize their list in order of importance as it applies to their recovery**, taking turns if a consensus can't be reached. If two things are of equal importance, such as attending recovery meetings and getting adequate sleep, the two can share a spot at the top. Once each group has finished,

take everyone on a gallery walk to see various responses; these can be used later.

5. Q4 - Mingle (20 minutes) - Have a very brief open discussion with the group. Ask them if there are people in their lives who don't trust them as a result of their past actions. Have them quickly name some examples of people (Probation/Parole Officer, Judge, Parent, Significant Other, Kids, Employer, etc.) Tell them that sharing schedules and routines related to recovery goals is one way to rebuild trust. It also presents an opportunity for important people in your life to join you, like if you plan to go to the gym or take a walk in the park.

Split the group in half. Assign one half of the room a role from the examples of people you just boarded. Tell them to take a minute and think of two things that are important to them or that they will want to ask about or see as they meet with the individual who just came out of rehab.

While that half is thinking, line up the other half of the room across from the first half. Tell them that they are trying to actively build trust with the individual across from them by talking about their routines related to recovery goals.

Tell the group that they'll have 3 minutes with each partner, then you'll ask them to switch partners. The individual who has a role always needs to introduce themselves first so that the one just out of treatment knows who they're talking to.

After three rounds, have groups switch. In their last pairs, have the individual with a role give it to their partner. Again, give everyone a minute to prepare for their new roles, then do 3 more rounds of the activity.

Some factors could include the how much time to allocate to an activity (*exercising for 20 minutes vs. an hour*), opportunity cost (*making one's bed and journaling each morning vs. an extra 30 minutes of sleep*), contingency plans (*concentrated breathing to classical music if rain interrupts gardening or a walk*), and the feasibility that the routine can be completed daily or weekly (*cooking a delicious, healthy meal may be a better routine for a non-work day for many participants*).

6. Group Discussion (10 minutes) Bring everyone back together as a group. When individuals were in the role of the person listening to the other's routines, what are some things they thought about? What did they think worked or didn't work? Did they have any doubts about a person's ability to commit or be consistent? Did they have any advice? (*An open group discussion or a ball throw would work well here*)
7. Home Practice - Participants complete their routine tracking sheet and come ready to discuss it at the next session. Distribute the Healthy Habits document for reference as the group exits.