

Quitting Crystal

15 tips to help you quit or reduce your use
and point you in the right direction!



Crystal,

like other stimulant drugs,

can make you have intense memories and thoughts about what life is like when you're high. It can feel like anything and everything gets you thinking about using crystal meth! These memories and thoughts are called **TRIGGERS**. Triggers can lead to **CRAVINGS** - and intense need or feeling that you want to use meth. **Much of the work of quitting is learning how to deal with triggers and cravings.** They are automatic, natural and inevitable. But you can learn new ways to deal with triggers and reduce your cravings.

If you use crystal on a regular basis and decide you want to quit, here are some tips that might help you reach your goal. Don't be overwhelmed by everything on this list. These are merely suggestions from other users who have quit successfully. Do what feels right for you and make changes where you can.

Don't give up!



(206) 323-1768 * info@projectneon.org

www.projectneon.org

TIP #1

Set small goals that are easier to reach.

Be realistic about what you can achieve. Avoid thinking in terms of “forever.” Think in terms of days, hours or even minutes. Not using for one day is much easier than not using for a whole month. Quitting “cold turkey” is not for everyone. Try cutting back your use in steps. Use twice a week instead of every day, or twice a month instead of every weekend. Use 1/4 gram instead of 1/2, or use 1/8 instead of 1/4. This can help with withdrawal as well.



TIP #2

Get rid of your drugs and drug paraphernalia.

This includes all product, baggies, spoons, needles, bleach, mirrors, and any other stuff you use when you get high. Be sure you get rid of stuff you may have stashed in your house or car, or at a friend's house. If porn is a trigger, get rid of your mags and videos, too!





TIP #3

**Throw out phone numbers
that trigger thoughts about
using.**

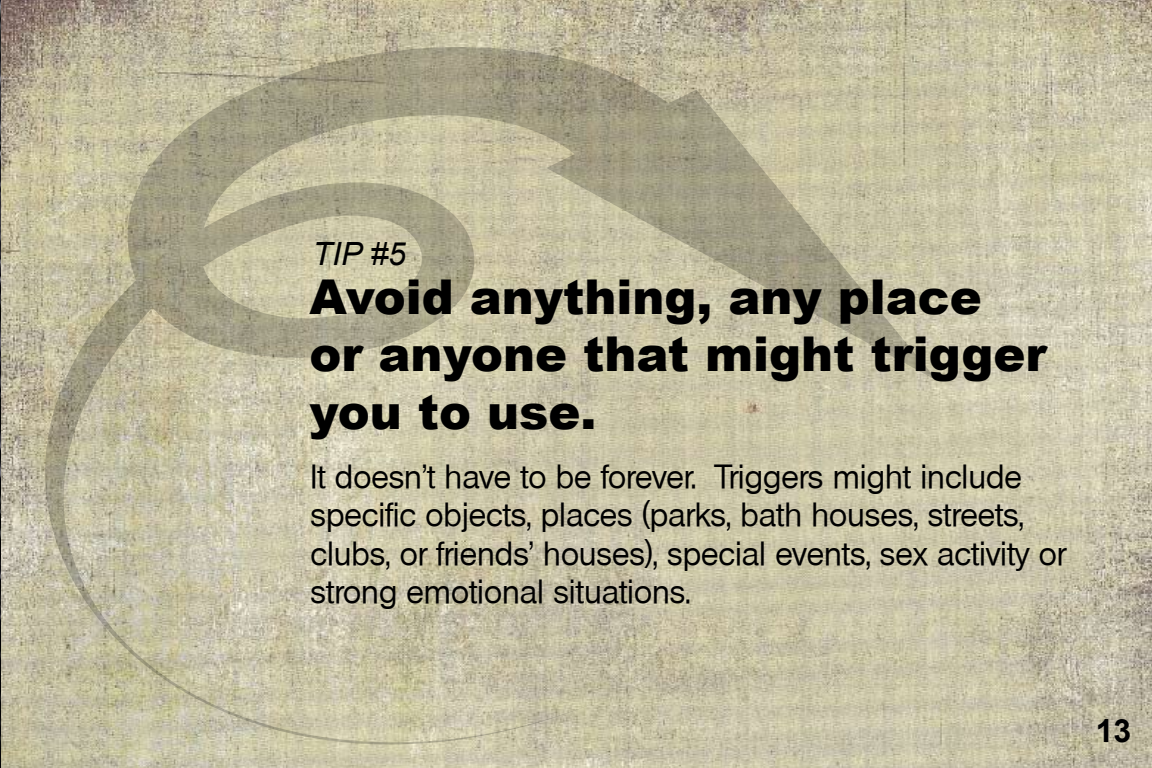
Change your phone number. Get rid of your pager. Make it hard for your dealer and drug acquaintances to reach you. Make it hard for you to reach them. Toss out any drug-related phone numbers.

TIP #4

Become aware of your using patterns.

Like when, why, where and with whom you use most often. Whenever you can, avoid these situations and find other activities to substitute for using. Hang out with friends who don't use or go to a movie instead of a bar or club.





TIP #5

**Avoid anything, any place
or anyone that might trigger
you to use.**

It doesn't have to be forever. Triggers might include specific objects, places (parks, bath houses, streets, clubs, or friends' houses), special events, sex activity or strong emotional situations.




TIP # 6

Schedule your day thoroughly.

Boredom is ENEMY #1 for most crystal users because it can tempt you to use. Try to keep yourself occupied all the time. Exercise, hobbies, shopping, volunteering or napping are all great ways to keep busy.





TIP # 7

Anticipate withdrawal.

Symptoms may include severe mood swings, irregular sleep, depression, anxiety, boredom, irritability and feeling completely hopeless about everything in life.

These experiences are very common and will ease up over time. These symptoms may also make you want to use again, so have a plan for how you deal with them.





TIP # 8

Make a plan.

Before you get into a situation where you feel like you might use, have a plan about how you are going to deal with it. Are you going to call a friend? Then have their number handy at all times. Are you going to go to a meeting or support group? Have a schedule so you know when and where you can go.



*TIP # 9***Watch your eating habits.**

Limit your intake of caffeine, sugar and white flour products like pastries, cookies and white bread. Sugar comes in many forms: white, brown, honey, high fructose corn syrup, molasses, flavored syrups - so read the labels.

Sugar affects the same brain chemicals as meth. Eating sweet foods will start a cycle of highs and lows. You may feel like you're "crashing," sort of like when you come down off crystal. This feeling may make you crave more sugar and/or even meth.

When a sugar craving hits, eat protein instead (cheese, beans, burritos, burgers, yogurt, etc.).

TIP #10

Exercise!

Exercise helps produce endorphins and other “feel good” chemicals in your body. It also stimulates your immune system, relieves boredom and improves energy.

Try walking, working out, roller blading, yoga, etc.





TIP #11

Get a health check-up.

Quitting or cutting back can be hard on your body. See your doctor or local community clinic to make sure you don't have any untreated health problems.

You could be eligible for free care, and there are special programs for people who are HIV+.

Check out the resources on the back page.



TIP #12

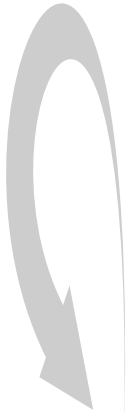
Try alternative therapies.

Yoga, acupuncture, nutritional supplements and some herbal remedies can be very helpful for reducing cravings, balancing moods and regulating sleep. Health food stores and natural clinics are good sources for information.

TIP #13

Be Patient.

Rome wasn't built in a day. You didn't get to where you're at in a day. And you won't get out of it in one day either. If you don't achieve 100% of your goal, don't give up. Focus on the progress you have made and go on from there. Review these tips again. Give yourself credit for what you have achieved and get on with making positive change in your life.



TIP #14

Get Support.

Don't do it alone! 12-step groups work for some people. Crystal support groups may work for others. Spending time with friends who don't use or seeing a counselor may also be helpful. Check out the resource list on the back page for ideas.





Help!



TIP # 15

Explore your treatment options.

If you find it difficult to quit on your own, you may need additional support to reach your goals. There are many types of treatment programs available. Making decisions about treatment can be scary and stressful, so it's a good idea to talk with a counselor about your options. Information about free and low-cost treatment is available from the resource list on the back of this brochure.

ACAP (AIDS Care Access Project) * 206.284.9277

Health and dental referrals for people with HIV

Alcohol / Drug 24-Hour Help Line *

Information and referral: 206.722.3700; 8 am – 10pm 7/days

Outside Seattle 1.800.562.1240; 8 am – 10pm 7/days

Capitol Hill Alano Club * 206.860.9560

Gay-focused 12-step meetings

Community Info Line * 206.461.3200

Free referral to low cost clinics or medical providers

Gay City Wellness Center * 206.860.6969

Free anonymous and confidential

HIV and syphilis screening

Lifelong Aids Alliance * 206.328.8979

Medical case management

Narcotics Anonymous * 206.790.8888

Daily 12-step programs

People of Color AIDS Network * 206.322.7061

Individual and group level harm reduction services

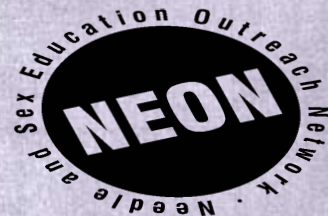
Seattle Counseling Service * 206.323.1768

NEON sponsors free counseling and a variety of support groups exclusively for crystal users. Other low-cost treatment services are also available. Ask to speak with a NEON counselor when you call.

24-hour crisis line * 206.461.3222

24 hours

1.800.244.5767 Crisis line; 8 am – 10 PM/7-days



Needle and Sex Education Outreach Network

www.projectneon.org

We provide information and services to gay and bisexual men who use crystal methamphetamine. We do not judge. We are a collaboration of people from Seattle Counseling Service and many gay and bisexual men who use crystal.



NEON's goals are to:

- Raise awareness about the links between crystal use and transmission of HIV and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).
- Provide accurate and truthful information about how crystal affects the body and mind, provide options for reducing sexual and drug using risks associated with crystal and provide free help to better manage or stop crystal use.

NEON provides needle exchange * peer education * health information * referrals * one-on-one counseling * advocacy. We also sponsor several groups for men who want to manage, cut down, or quit crystal altogether. Counseling and groups are provided at Seattle Counseling Service. All NEON services are FREE. We are NOT a 12-step program.

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