

Slide 1 – Title Slide	5 Tips for Breaking Bad Habits
Slide 2	Tip #1: Notice When Your Habits Have Become Automatic
Slide 3	Most of the time when we engage in unhealthy habits, we do it automatically. In fact, our minds are generally preoccupied thinking of something else while we pick up the cigarette, finish off a bag of chips, have that extra drink of alcohol, or settle into the couch to watch TV rather than going for a walk.
Slide 4	Automatic behaviors are largely unconscious, meaning we don't really think about them. We often don't even notice that we are doing them.
Slide 5	Tip #2: Practice Mindful Awareness
Slide 6	Some people find they can stop an unhealthy habit cold turkey. For most of us though, it takes a conscious process over time.
Slide 7	The first step in this process is to practice mindful awareness. Because these habits largely occur automatically and unconsciously, we need to regain our ability to notice and to be present with what we're doing, when we are doing it, and without self judgement or criticism.
Slide 8	Without changing the pattern of the unhealthy habit at all, we simply bring our awareness to it. We smoke the entire cigarette or eat the whole bag of chips while being present with the activity and the sensations of what we are doing.
Slide 9	It's almost as if we subconsciously choose to push our awareness aside and not notice when we are doing something that conflicts with our own values or what we most want for our health and well-being.
Slide 10	Many people find that simply deciding to engage in the habit with full awareness lessens the frequency and duration of their unhealthy patterns.
Slide 11	By turning back around with a kind and compassionate awareness, we can again notice the full experience of the habit in which we are engaged.
Slide 12	Tip #3: Identify Daily Triggers
Slide 13	Our habits are often tied to other events of our day. For example, we pick up the cigarette after we finish a meal or as we get into the car, we eat more food than we really want or need while engaged in conversation, we settle into the couch to watch TV at the same time every day after work.
Slide 14	Tip #4: Become Aware of Emotional Triggers
Slide 15	In addition to being tied to events in our day, these habits are often tied to emotional triggers. We eat when we're sad, angry, depressed, lonely, bored, or excited. We tend to grab a drink or a cigarette in the same way.
Slide 16	Tip #5: Ride the Urge Wave
Slide 17	Eventually, with practice, we notice the <i>urge to engage</i> in the habit even before we do it. Noticing the urge and learning to ride the wave of discomfort that comes when an urge develops gives us time to choose to engage in the habit or not. When we are aware in this way, we can choose to experience the urge without engaging in the habit.
Slide 18	The mind seeks pleasure and avoids pain as a survival mechanism. The problem with this is that the mind is often focused on short-term pleasure and pain, not long term. In order to change a habit, we need to train the mind to manage the short-term pain of not giving in to an urge.



Slide 19	It can seem as though the urge lasts forever and keeps escalating in intensity until we give in. In fact, though, most urges generally only last from 1-5 minutes. They arise, intensify, peak, and then resolve and we are free of them for a while.
Slide 20	Although urges often return, they grow less frequent and less intense if we don't engage them with our thoughts or "feed the habit" by giving in to it. Riding the urge wave will enable us to live the life we really want and to break free of automatic behaviors that harm us.
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