

Please introduce yourself before reading...

The Tools of Recovery

For a tool to work, it must be used. The tools are methods by which we work and live the Twelve Steps.

Plan of Eating: According to our group consensus, abstinence is achieved by adhering to a daily food plan that includes specific foods and portions, weighed and measured meals, and refraining from eating sugar and white flour. Whatever plan we use, rigorous honesty makes it clear that we don't eat foods or amounts that are not included in our plan. When we honestly abstain from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors, we achieve and maintain a healthy body weight. We find that committing ourselves to a clearly defined plan of eating helps us deal with the gray areas of living. But we must keep in mind that no eating plan will be permanently effective for us unless we daily practice the twelve steps of recovery on all levels—physical, emotional, and spiritual.

Literature: We read OA-Approved literature, including the Alcoholics Anonymous “Big Book” and “Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.” When we substitute the words “compulsive eater” for “alcoholic” and “food” for “alcohol,” we feel we identify absolutely. All of our literature provides insight into our problem of eating compulsively, the strength to deal with it, and the very real hope that there is a solution for us. Along with the tool of Writing, we use OA-Approved literature as a tool of examination and release.

Writing: Our writing assignments for the first 30 days of working the OA HOW program are taken from the AA Big Book and AA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. We believe that negative thinking is a large part of our disease, and using the tools of Literature and Writing helps us learn, one day at a time, to abstain from negative thinking. When we put our difficulties down on paper, it becomes easier to see situations more clearly and perhaps better discern any necessary action.

Action Plan: An action plan is the process of identifying and implementing attainable actions, both daily and long-term, that are necessary to support our individual abstinence and emotional, spiritual, and physical recovery.

While the plan is ours, tailored to our own recovery process, most of us find it important to work with a sponsor, fellow OA member and/or appropriate professional to help us create it. This tool, like our plan of eating, may vary widely among members and may need to be adjusted as we progress in our recovery.

Along with working the steps on a daily basis, an action plan may incorporate use of other OA tools to bring structure, balance, and manageability into our lives.

Anonymity: With regard to meetings, what you see here, what you hear here, when you leave here, let it stay here. When we meet another member in the outside world, we do not mention they are members of OA HOW.

Telephone: Reaching out to another OA member. The telephone is our daily link to our sponsors. It is a way to reach out to other OA members who share our disease. We make four telephone calls per day—one to our sponsor and three outreach calls to other members in the program using the “We Care” list found at our weekly meetings.

Meetings: We find out that we are not alone. Attendance at a minimum of three meetings a week is suggested. The list of meeting places is available at all meetings. The strength derived from these meetings is most beneficial.

Service: Service is working the tools of the program to the best of our ability, giving back what we have been given, helping out at meetings (for example, setting up chairs, welcoming newcomers), volunteering to be a service person such as treasurer, secretary, literature person, intergroup representative, and so on. Abstinence is a service to ourselves and the group.

Sponsorship: A sponsor is a compulsive eater who, thanks to a power greater than ourselves, has 30 days of back-to-back OA-HOW abstinence as defined above in the tool, Plan of Eating. A sponsor will help you through your first 30 days of abstinence, has completed 30 days of questions, and has taken the first three steps.