

Steps to Overcome Pornography Addiction

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At a certain point, **pornography viewing ceases to be merely a bad habit and becomes an obsessive-compulsive addiction**. Those caught in this cycle can *recognize the stages in their pornography viewing habits*. From the initial sexual thoughts, a feeling of fear and a desire to avoid watching are triggered; despite these feelings, *the compulsion to watch pornography is too great, leading to a sense of shame and guilt after watching*. While a person trapped in this cycle will vow to never watch pornography again, sexual thoughts recur and lead to another round of this pattern.

If you recognize these symptoms of **pornography addiction** in yourself, here are the steps you can take to overcome your addiction.

Understanding Healthy Sexuality

The first step in overcoming an addiction to pornography is *recognizing what healthy sexuality looks like*. For those with a beneficial sexual outlook, their **sexual expression is positive and enriching as they both give and receive** while experiencing pleasure. This type of sexuality benefits the individual emotionally and spiritually as well as physically.

In contrast, an unhealthy sexuality involves a sense of shame around sexual thoughts, a feeling that one's sexual energy is *uncontrollable* or a desire to use sex to exploit others through power or force in a way that is not consensual. In general, pornography addicts have this sexual outlook as they use pornography in order to feel *wanted, important, or powerful*.

Recognizing the Signs of Pornography Addiction

Common signs of an addiction to pornography include **increasing social isolation, defensiveness or guilt** regarding your pornography usage, continued **reliance on pornography despite the negative consequences**, a **loss of control** and **inability to stop, obsessive thoughts** about pornography, and/or a **strain in your relationship and intimacy with your partner**.

Identifying Your Personal Triggers

Pinpointing the physiological changes in your body that occur and induce you to give in to your pornography addiction *is an important part of recovery*. Many addicts experience similar symptoms as they feel a strong urge to view pornography or masturbate compulsively; **these signs can include increased blood pressure, a rapid pulse, shallow breathing and dilated pupils**. *Recognizing these changes in your body can provide you with important information that can help change your addictive behavior*.

In short, by observing your normal pulse rate and breathing pattern, you will be able to recognize any changes that indicate that you may be about to lose control and give in to your pornography addiction. Similarly, by noticing a decrease in your heart beat and a return to normal breathing, you can acknowledge that your urges are passing. **The observation of breathing is particularly important as it is the only subconscious function of our bodies that we are able to consciously control**. By taking deep, slow and controlled breaths when you recognize that you are feeling the physical symptoms of a pornography craving, **you can directly affect your subconscious mind and exert control over your addiction**.

A simple controlled breathing exercise that you can use involves slowly breathing in, holding your breath, and breathing out to a count of 10 each time. Repeating this exercise 10 times can *help you control your response to*

your personal triggers.

Treating the Underlying Causes

*Understanding and addressing any underlying causes that are contributing to your pornography addiction is an important step on the road to recovery. For many people, **pornography and excessive internet use in general becomes a method to use to self-soothe in response to depression, anxiety, stress, trauma, boredom or loneliness.*** Addressing these underlying causes can make overcoming your pornography addiction easier.

Seeking Effective Treatment for Pornography Addiction

Finding the best treatment method *for you* is key to overcoming your addiction to pornography. Many people are helped by *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, a free support group similar to Alcoholics Anonymous. **For those with [pornography addictions](#) who need specialized treatment and individualized attention, [Pathways Real Life Recovery](#) in Utah offers the help you need.** Our *open, accepting and non-shaming* atmosphere provides the *necessary support* required to *overcome* your pornography addiction, and our *customized treatment plans* can address your *unique needs* including co-occurring disorders. **Please [contact Pathways Real Life Recovery](#) today to receive a *free* consultation.**