

# RELAPSE PART 3: YOUR RELAPSE REMINDER CARD



Managing a lapse with a “relapse reminder card” can help you re-focus your thoughts on the positive rather than the negative aspects of a lapse. It’s important to take care of feelings of guilt or self blame by affirming that lapses are opportunities for learning that are external, specific and controllable. Do not punish yourself. The goal is to accept a lapse as a single, isolated event.

## The Relapse Process

To understand the relapse process, it is important to first define some key terms:

### High Risk Situation

A setting or circumstance in which you could be tempted to stray from your meal and exercise plans.

### Lapse

A single or temporary step backward toward old behaviors, i.e. giving into that temptation.

### Relapse

A series of lapses which have occurred repeatedly. You resort to former unhealthy behaviors and you feel unable to take corrective action.

## What To Do When a Lapse Occurs:

1. **Stop, look and listen.** Stop what you’re doing and try to remove yourself to a safe place where you can gain your composure and think rationally.
2. **Stay calm.** Breathe deeply to relax yourself and clear your mind. Use some positive self-talk to remind yourself that you can cope with this situation. By staying calm, you’re better able to view the lapse objectively and learn from it.
3. **Review your progress.** Take a minute to remind yourself of your many successes. Then take a moment to renew your commitment to your weight management efforts.
4. **Launch into immediate action.** If possible, get out and do something. Exercise, visit a friend, volunteer your time for a good cause. Whatever you do, do not punish yourself.
5. **Analyze the lapse.** First, determine what the situation was that placed you at risk. Then, identify three coping strategies you can use in similar circumstance in the future.
6. **Ask for help.** If you think you’d profit from receiving support or encouragement from someone—a Numetra System team member, a friend or a family member — don’t hesitate to ask for it.

## Activity: Relapse Reminder Card

Get a 3” x 5” index card. This will be your “relapse reminder” card. Write down the six statements above.

Put this reminder card in your purse or wallet. If you experience a lapse during the next week, pull out your reminder card and use it to help you manage the lapse. At the end of the week, take a moment to respond to the following questions:

- Did you have to use the reminder card?
- If so, what were the circumstances?
- How did the reminder card work?
- What steps would you include to make it more helpful to you?

Remember, giving in to a single high-risk situation will not undermine your weight management efforts. The key to success is preventing a lapse from turning into a relapse.