

T-Break Guide

A guide to help support you on a
cannabis tolerance break

~ Community Edition ~



Check Your Progress

- Day 1
- Day 2
- Day 3
- Day 4
- Day 5
- Day 6
- Day 7
- Day 8
- Day 9
- Day 10
- Day 11
- Day 12
- Day 13
- Day 14
- Day 15
- Day 16
- Day 17
- Day 18
- Day 19
- Day 20
- Day 21

go.uvm.edu/tbreak



Day 0 – Preparation

Timing

Pick a date to start your T-Break. A 21 day stretch with some stability would be ideal. But there may never be a perfect time, and that's ok.

Give it a little thought, but just pick a date. 4.9 (s)-2.7 (o)-9.69717 (s)1 (e m(l)-12 (44T9



Day 1 – Stay Busy


"The first days are the best" – Tom (E. 3rd) at the W. J. O'Connell (t.o.c.) let (d) (n) g. (r) o. (r) 2





Day 9 – Irritability

*“But I’m aggravated without it
My saddest days are without it
My Saturdays are the loudest
I’m blowing strong”*



Day 15 – Outsourcing

*“Avoid using cigarettes, alcohol, or drugs
as alternatives to being an interesting person”*

-Marilyn vos Savant


Have you ever heard someone talk about alcohol as 'personality in a bottle'? Or say that they are more funny, or better at flirting or dancing when they are drunk? That's outsourcing. We are attributing how we feel inside to something outside of us. With cannabis, it is less common, but still happens plenty.

We act like it is the alcohol that knows the jokes or the dance moves. We act as if a substance miraculously grants us previously absent skills. That's not what happens.

When someone describes a substance as making them feel "whole", "loved" or "comfortable in my skin" - those are flags for addiction. It does not mean they are guaranteed to have a problem, but as humans, if that's the only time they feel good, they are going to want to do it all the time.




Day 17 – Escape



*“Any time someone gives you drugs, the purpose is to subdue. Always.
Whether it is from a dealer, a friend, your mother or your government”
~Northern Adams*

I'll never forget this particular conversation that I had with a student.
She talked



Day 19 – Connecting Down

*“I don’t care about anyone not liking me,
you bitches barely like yourselves”*

~Cardi B

Yesterday's theme of connecting up was a bit metaphysical.
Today's is more grounded.

We need connection to the people around us. Those connections are roots that feed us, anchor us, and secure us in a storm. We grow connected to the people who are there for us when we need them.

Cannabis is one way to make connections to other people. But how can we know the difference between real friends and weed friends?

If those connections grow beyond cannabis and become grounded in something deeper, there's a chance they can last.



A Note About CBD

People have asked me about using CBD during their break. I would say two things:

1. it is your break. I support you doing what's best for you
2. if possible, try to limit or abstain from CBD during your break

Here's why:

Tolerance is not just chemical- it's behavioral. Although a person could likely use CBD during a break and still reduce their chemical tolerance to THC, that person might miss out on other aspects of tolerance.

Behavioral tolerance includes the habits, routines, and rituals that we build into cannabis use. These, in turn, come to impact our thoughts and cravings... and even the very experience of being high. As chemical tolerance goes up, we increasingly come to rely on these behavioral aspects for enjoyment. To gain perspective, it can be helpful to take a break from these too.

Here's my advice:

If possible, don't use CBD during a break. However, if you really struggle with withdrawal and that would keep you from taking a break... use it.

If you are going to use CBD, try these two practices. First, if possible, only use CBD during the early days when physical withdrawal is strong, then try tapering off. Second, when you use CBD, use it in the most boring way possible. Take drops, an oil, or a simple edible. (Don't use CBD flower as a replacement in your bong or joints.) Taking these steps might help reduce your behavioral tolerance too.

A Note About Nicotine

Some people like to mix tobacco in with cannabis. In many places, tobacco costs less than cannabis, so it saves a little money. And, since tobacco is not great for our health... people like that they are not using as much tobacco. Those two things are positive. But the combination of tobacco and cannabis also creates some not so good things.

Cannabis is a bronchodilator: it opens up the lungs. When inhaled together, the nicotine goes deeper into your lungs. (This is why people often cough when used together, even if they don't when used separately.) The headrush that people experience may be asphyxiation: a temporary lack of oxygen. Some people like this feeling so much that they want to experience it over and over.

Thank You

This guide would not be possible without the insight, editing, and support of so many people. Most especially, the students who have shared their stories and experience:

BC, KP, BD, SL, MB, MK, AT, MW, SK, JS, CH, CS, AW, BP, EP, ~~BL~~, ~~CO~~, RJ, JF

Special editing thanks to student and star Kaisy Wheeler you have a gift. (And you hate when I start a sentence with “and”)

Thank you to colleagues in the field, who have been generous in spirit and mind: Amelia Arria, Brian Bowden, Alan Budney, Diane Fedorchak, Jason Kilmer, Nancy Reynolds, Peter Rives, Jay Schum, Andrea Villanti, Jonah Neville, Ben Montemayor.

The idea for this format came from the Student Well-Being Center at Notre Dame. Thanks ND.

And thank you to the Vermont Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs for a grant supporting translation and research.

Thank you to the University of Vermont. And to my co-workers in LivingWell (especially Michael Hill Jr and Amy Boyd Austin) for adding to and supporting this work.

