

MAA Closed Back To Basics Step Study Action Group

What Does Media Fasting Really Mean and What Constitutes a Slip or Relapse

More Details About Media Fasting — What it Means

There's a difference between simply abstaining from our addictive media and true media fasting. Here is what we mean when we say use only necessary media:

- Fasting means using NO MEDIA or TECH unless it's **absolutely** necessary for work, school, or essential family needs (like doctor appointments or school messages). This includes: no TV, radio, movies, news, streaming, social media, gaming, porn, nonessential shopping, word games, dating apps, unnecessary internet, apps, watching or listen to games, or gambling.
- We strongly advocate leaving out podcasts, music, fiction books, magazines, online reading, audiobooks, meditation apps, sports apps, unnecessary messaging, newsletters, or anything else you get lost in or use more than you planned.
- Even if you don't think you're addicted to something like music or novels, many of us have found that leaving it out makes us feel much better. The more you leave out, the freer and clearer your mind will be.
- Fasting is actually easier with less media, even if it doesn't seem addictive to you. Sometimes, even "harmless" media leads us back to other media. Pause before you use and ask yourself: "Is this REALLY necessary?"
- If your family or friends want to watch a movie together, suggest a different activity, like a board game, dancing, a walk, or something else without media. There's a list of 300 things to do instead of media in your packets.
- If you're somewhere where media is on, like your family or friends' house or a restaurant, ask if it can be turned off, spend time in another room, or turn your back to the screen. Inform those close to you that you'll be fasting this month and would appreciate their support.
- Work with your sponsor to clearly define your necessary media. If you're not sure if something is okay, talk to your sponsor or Group Sponsors. Keep reminders near your devices: "Is this REALLY necessary?" and "When in doubt, leave it out."

- Stay in the gift of desperation [GOD]: Don't use, no matter what, even if your hair is on fire. Believe it or not, the more you are away from all unnecessary media, the easier the media fast will be, and you will feel more overall freedom from the obsession.

We encourage you, at the outset, to be honest with yourself and your sponsor. You are ultimately responsible for your recovery. We are here to support you in your fast, but we will not be spying on you to see if you are keeping all your commitments. You know if you are doing the work or not. This is not a program for people who need it. It is not a program for people who want it. It is a program for people who DO IT!

Our Approach to Slips and Relapses

Remember, we have an addiction, we are powerless, and it is not a moral issue if you slip or relapse. This does not make you a bad person. Rather, you are a sick person trying to get well. Here are our definitions of slips and relapses, and what we suggest:

- **Slips or Relapse**

A slip is using *unnecessary* media, and a relapse is using *bottom-line* media. Discuss slips or relapses with your sponsor or Group Sponsors ONLY.

- **If You Should Have a Slip:**

Immediately tell your sponsor and fill out a *Breakdown Worksheet*. Ongoing slips may mean you're not ready for this committed program. Missing meetings without previous permission is also considered a slip.

- **If You Should Relapse:**

If you are binging on your bottom-line media, we ask you to be honest about it and be willing to take yourself out of the group until ready to recommit to fully fasting.

These guidelines are our key to freedom. Our media fast is meant to detox you, so you can get your life back, work these steps, and have the promised personality change needed to recover from media addiction. If you're not ready for this level of commitment, or if this group isn't the right fit for you, we understand and encourage you to find recovery through another method.