

PAWS SYMPTOM TRACKER

A Men's Recovery Worksheet



Wish Recovery

Track your post-acute withdrawal symptoms, spot your patterns, and take back control.

What Is PAWS?

Post-Acute Withdrawal Syndrome (PAWS) is a set of emotional and psychological symptoms that persist after the initial detox phase -- sometimes for months or years. It affects roughly 75-90% of people in recovery.

Common symptoms include: mood swings, brain fog, low motivation, irritability, anxiety, depression, sleep problems, low libido, and cravings that come in waves.

PAWS is your brain healing -- not a sign of failure. Tracking your symptoms helps you spot triggers, recognise patterns, and stay ahead of relapse risk.

How to use this worksheet

1. Fill in your name and sobriety date on each week's tracker.
2. Each day, rate each symptom from 0 (none) to 3 (severe) -- takes about 2 minutes.
3. Note any triggers or events in the 'Notes' column.
4. Review your week on Sunday: identify patterns and share with your therapist or sponsor.
5. Use the Reflection pages at the end to track what's working and what isn't.

Severity Rating Scale

0	1	2	3
None	Mild -- barely noticeable	Moderate -- affects my day	Severe -- hard to function

Remember: PAWS symptoms come in 'waves and windows' -- you'll have good days and harder days. That's normal. The goal is to see the overall trend moving in the right direction over weeks and months.

Week 1 Tracker

Name: _____

Sobriety date: _____

Week starting: _____

Symptom	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Notes / Triggers
Brain fog / poor concentration								
Mood swings / emotional highs & lows								
Irritability / anger								
Anxiety								
Depression / low mood								
Low motivation / apathy								
Sleep problems / insomnia								
Fatigue / low energy								
Cravings								
Low libido								
Social withdrawal								
Stress sensitivity								
Daily total (add column)								

Rate each symptom: 0 = None | 1 = Mild | 2 = Moderate | 3 = Severe

Weekly Reflection

What was my hardest symptom this week?

What triggered my worst days?

What helped most this week?

One thing I'll try differently next week:

Week 2 Tracker

Name: _____

Sobriety date: _____

Week starting: _____

Symptom	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Notes / Triggers
Brain fog / poor concentration								
Mood swings / emotional highs & lows								
Irritability / anger								
Anxiety								
Depression / low mood								
Low motivation / apathy								
Sleep problems / insomnia								
Fatigue / low energy								
Cravings								
Low libido								
Social withdrawal								
Stress sensitivity								
Daily total (add column)								

Rate each symptom: 0 = None | 1 = Mild | 2 = Moderate | 3 = Severe

Weekly Reflection

What was my hardest symptom this week?

What triggered my worst days?

What helped most this week?

One thing I'll try differently next week:

Week 3 Tracker

Name: _____

Sobriety date: _____

Week starting: _____

Symptom	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Notes / Triggers
Brain fog / poor concentration								
Mood swings / emotional highs & lows								
Irritability / anger								
Anxiety								
Depression / low mood								
Low motivation / apathy								
Sleep problems / insomnia								
Fatigue / low energy								
Cravings								
Low libido								
Social withdrawal								
Stress sensitivity								
Daily total (add column)								

Rate each symptom: 0 = None | 1 = Mild | 2 = Moderate | 3 = Severe

Weekly Reflection

What was my hardest symptom this week?

What triggered my worst days?

What helped most this week?

One thing I'll try differently next week:

Monthly Symptom Overview

At the end of each month, add up your daily totals and plot them below. Seeing the trend over time is one of the most motivating parts of tracking -- the line WILL trend downward as your brain heals.

Month: _____ Name: _____

Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
36																															
32																															
28																															
24																															
20																															
16																															
12																															
8																															
4																															
0																															

Instructions: Each day, plot a dot at your total symptom score for that day. Connect the dots at the end of the month. A downward trend over weeks = your brain is healing.

Your PAWS Coping Toolkit

Write in your personal go-to strategies for each symptom. Having a written plan makes it far easier to act on it when a PAWS wave hits.

When I feel brain fog / can't concentrate, I will:

When I feel irritable or angry, I will:

When anxiety spikes, I will:

When depression hits, I will:

When cravings come in waves, I will:

When I can't sleep, I will:

My support people I can call any time:

My professional support (therapist / sponsor / doctor):

Things that are NOT helpful for me (triggers to avoid):

Evidence that I am making progress (list wins, however small):

Important Reminders

PAWS is temporary. Symptoms gradually reduce in frequency and intensity with sustained sobriety. Most people see significant improvement within 6-12 months.

Waves and windows are normal. You'll have good stretches followed by tougher days. A bad day doesn't erase your progress -- it's part of how the brain heals.

You don't have to white-knuckle it. Medication, therapy (especially CBT), support groups, exercise, and sleep hygiene all have solid evidence behind them. Ask for help.

Cravings are not commands. A craving is a signal that your brain is adjusting -- not a sign you will or must use. Most cravings peak and pass within 15-20 minutes.

The men's experience is under-recognised. PAWS in men often shows up as anger, irritability, low libido, and social withdrawal rather than classic depression. Naming it is the first step to managing it.

Share this with your support system. Partners, family, and sponsors who understand PAWS are far better equipped to support you through it.

About this worksheet

This worksheet was created by wishiop.com to support men navigating post-acute withdrawal syndrome in addiction recovery.

For the full article -- symptoms, timelines, management strategies, and what partners need to know -- visit wishiop.com.

This worksheet is for informational and self-monitoring purposes only. It is not a substitute for professional medical or therapeutic advice. If you are in crisis or experiencing suicidal thoughts, contact the SAMHSA National Helpline: 1-800-662-4357 (free, confidential, 24/7).

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