



Recovery Environment Checklist

Creating a calmer home for illness recovery, addiction recovery, and nervous system repair

Recovery requires more than willpower.

Whether someone is recovering from illness, coming home after hospitalization, stepping away from food or substance addiction, or rebuilding after nervous system collapse, the environment matters.

The home can either support stabilization — or quietly keep the body, mind, and spirit in survival.

This checklist is designed to help you notice what in the home may be supporting recovery, and what may be creating stress, overwhelm, triggers, inflammation, dysregulation, or emotional pressure.

This is not about creating a perfect home. It is about creating a safer, calmer, more nourishing environment where recovery becomes possible.

I. The Recovery Space

The person in recovery needs a place where the nervous system can soften.

This may be a bedroom, guest room, living room corner, quiet chair, or simple rest area. The space should feel calm, clean, low-stimulation, and easy to be in.

Notice:

- Is there a dedicated space for rest and recovery?
- Is the space clean, peaceful, and uncluttered?
- Does the person feel safe in this room?
- Is the bed, chair, or rest area comfortable and supportive?
- Are essentials easy to reach?
- Is the room quiet enough for rest?

- Are harsh lights, screens, noise, or clutter creating stimulation?
- Are there strong smells, fragrances, or chemical products nearby?
- Does the space feel like it supports healing — or does it feel heavy?

Supportive Shift:

Choose one:

- Clear the bedside table
- Wash bedding
- Remove clutter from the floor
- Add soft lighting
- Remove synthetic fragrance
- Place water, tea, tissues, journal, or prayer items nearby
- Open a window for fresh air
- Create a simple basket of recovery essentials

Reflection:

What does this space need less of?

What does this space need more of?

What would help the person feel safer here?

2. Kitchen & Nourishment

Recovery is deeply connected to nourishment.

The kitchen should make supportive choices easier, not harder. This is especially important during illness recovery, nervous system repair, food addiction recovery, substance recovery, or post-crisis rebuilding.

Notice:

- Are simple nourishing foods available?
- Is the kitchen clean enough to prepare food easily?
- Are counters, stove, sink, and food prep areas clear and usable?
- Is there a plan for meals, hydration, minerals, and warm nourishment?
- Are foods easy to digest and prepare?
- Are broths, soups, teas, soft foods, or grounding meals available?

- Are processed foods, excess sugar, alcohol, or trigger foods in the home?
- Are inflammatory cooking oils still being used?
- Is someone helping with food if the person cannot cook?
- Does the kitchen feel calm, clean, and supportive?

Remove Inflammatory Cooking Oils

Remove or stop using inflammatory seed oils and highly processed oils, including:

- Canola oil
- Vegetable oil
- Soybean oil
- Corn oil
- Cottonseed oil
- Sunflower oil
- Safflower oil
- Grapeseed oil
- Rice bran oil
- Peanut oil
- Margarine
- Shortening
- “Plant butter” made with seed oils
- Cooking sprays made with seed oils
- Blended oils that contain seed oils
- Processed dressings, sauces, dips, and marinades made with seed oils
- Mayonnaise made with seed oils

Replace With Supportive Fats

Choose simple, traditional fats such as:

- Organic coconut oil
- Ghee
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Tallow

Use olive oil for low-heat cooking, dressings, and finishing. Use ghee, coconut oil, or tallow for higher-heat cooking.

Salt & Minerals

Replace refined table salt with a high-quality mineral or sea salt.

Recommended options:

- Maldon sea salt
- High-quality Himalayan salt
- High-quality sea salt

Use Maldon as a finishing salt for vegetables, soups, salads, eggs, grains, broths, and simple whole foods. It can make real food feel more satisfying and help bring pleasure back into nourishment.

For Himalayan salt or other sea salts, choose carefully. Look for independent reviews or testing when possible, especially for heavy metals, microplastics, and environmental contaminants.

Avoid:

- Refined table salt
- Anti-caking additives when possible
- Low-quality salts with no sourcing transparency
- Salt products that have concerning independent testing results

Supportive Shift:

Choose one:

- Clean the sink and counters
- Remove trigger foods or substances
- Remove inflammatory oils
- Stock coconut oil, ghee, olive oil, and tallow
- Add Maldon or a well-sourced mineral salt
- Make broth, soup, tea, or a simple nourishing meal
- Create a hydration station
- Put supportive foods at eye level
- Prepare food before the hardest part of the day

Reflection:

What food or kitchen pattern is making recovery harder?

What does the person need to feel nourished?

What needs to be removed from the kitchen?

3. Triggers, Substances & Food Addiction Patterns

For recovery from food addiction, substance use, numbing, compulsive patterns, or self-sabotage, the home needs to reduce cues that pull the person back into survival or craving.

This is not about shame. It is about making the environment safer.

Notice:

- Are alcohol, drugs, addictive substances, or trigger foods still in the home?
- Are there places, objects, routines, or times of day connected to the addictive pattern?
- Are there certain foods that lead to loss of control?
- Are there emotional triggers in the home that increase craving?
- Are loved ones bringing in foods or substances that undermine recovery?
- Is there a plan for the hardest time of day?
- Is the person supported without being policed or shamed?
- Is medical detox or clinical care needed before in-home recovery support?

Supportive Shift:

Choose one:

- Remove alcohol or substances from the home
- Remove trigger foods connected to addictive patterns
- Create a plan for evenings or vulnerable windows
- Replace the craving ritual with tea, broth, prayer, walk, bath, music, or rest
- Set clear household agreements
- Reduce shame-based conversations
- Create a food rhythm before hunger becomes extreme
- Coordinate medical or clinical care if needed

Reflection:

What is the strongest trigger in the home?

What time of day needs the most support?

What would make the home feel less tempting and more supportive?

4. Nervous System Safety

The nervous system needs signals of safety in order to repair.

When the home is loud, cluttered, chaotic, chemically burdened, emotionally intense, or unpredictable, recovery becomes harder.

Notice:

- Is the home calm or chaotic?
- Is there constant noise, TV, conflict, or interruption?
- Are harsh lights used in the evening?
- Are LED lights creating a cold or overstimulating feeling?
- Is there enough quiet?
- Are visitors limited when needed?
- Is the person protected from pressure, arguments, and emotional intensity?
- Are there rhythms for rest, meals, sunlight, prayer, and quiet?
- Does the person have permission to do less?

Replace LED Lighting

Remove or reduce LED lighting wherever possible, especially in bedrooms, recovery rooms, living spaces, and evening areas.

Replace LED bulbs with incandescent bulbs where available and appropriate.

Incandescent light feels warmer, softer, and more natural to the nervous system, especially in the evening. The goal is to reduce harsh, blue-toned, overstimulating light and create a home environment that supports rest, rhythm, and regulation.

Supportive Shift:

Choose one:

- Replace bedroom LEDs with incandescent bulbs
- Dim lights after sunset
- Turn off background TV
- Create a quiet hour
- Limit visitors
- Move hard conversations out of the recovery space

- Create a morning sunlight rhythm
- Add prayer, stillness, music, breath, or nature time
- Build rest into the day without guilt

Reflection:

What is overstimulating the nervous system right now?

What would help the body feel safer today?

What needs to become quieter?

5. Clean Air, Products & Chemical Load

Recovery is affected by the air, products, scents, and chemicals in the home.

A healing space should feel breathable, simple, and clean — not perfumed or chemical-heavy.

Notice:

- Are cleaning products strongly scented?
- Are plug-ins, sprays, scented candles, or artificial fragrances used?
- Are laundry products heavily scented?
- Are personal care products simple and clean?
- Are harsh chemicals stored near food, pets, children, or sleeping areas?
- Does the home smell natural, neutral, clean, or chemical-heavy?
- Does the person experience headaches, coughing, irritation, fatigue, or tension around certain products?
- Are chemical cleaners being used in the recovery space?

Remove Chemical Cleaning Products

Remove or stop using harsh chemical cleaning products, including:

- Artificial fragrance sprays
- Plug-in air fresheners
- Scented cleaning sprays
- Bleach-based sprays for everyday cleaning
- Ammonia-based cleaners
- Synthetic floor cleaners
- Chemical bathroom sprays

- Strongly scented laundry detergent
- Scent boosters
- Dryer sheets
- Fabric softeners
- Artificially scented candles
- Disinfectant sprays used unnecessarily throughout the home

Replace With Simple Cleaning Staples

Use simple, traditional cleaning supplies such as:

- Baking soda
- White vinegar
- Castile soap
- Borax
- Natural laundry detergent

These can replace most conventional household cleaning products and help create a cleaner, calmer, less chemically burdened home.

Supportive Shift:

Choose one:

- Remove plug-in fragrances
- Replace scented laundry detergent with natural laundry detergent
- Stop using dryer sheets and scent boosters
- Use baking soda for sinks, tubs, and gentle scrubbing
- Use vinegar and water for simple cleaning
- Use castile soap for surface cleaning
- Use borax for laundry support where appropriate
- Open windows when cleaning
- Remove strong scents from the recovery room

Reflection:

What product or scent feels stressful to the body?

What can be replaced today?

How can the air become cleaner and calmer?

6. Daily Rhythm & Structure

Recovery needs rhythm.

Not a rigid schedule. A gentle structure that tells the body: food is coming, rest is allowed, support is present, and the day has a shape.

Notice:

- Is there a predictable rhythm for waking, meals, rest, and sleep?
- Is the person eating before they become depleted?
- Is hydration easy to access?
- Are mornings calm or chaotic?
- Are evenings overstimulating?
- Is there time for sunlight and fresh air?
- Is there a rhythm for quiet, prayer, journaling, or reflection?
- Is there too much pressure to “get better” quickly?
- Is the person supported in doing less?

Supportive Shift:

Create a simple rhythm:

- Morning hydration
- Sunlight or fresh air
- Nourishing breakfast
- Rest period
- Simple lunch
- Quiet afternoon
- Early, simple dinner
- Lights dimmed after sunset
- Screens reduced
- Prayer, reading, music, or stillness before bed

Reflection:

Where does the day fall apart?

What rhythm would create the most stability?

What needs to become simpler?

7. Emotional Atmosphere

Recovery is affected by the emotional field of the home.

Fear, pressure, conflict, shame, urgency, and constant problem-solving can keep the body in survival. Calm presence, honesty, gentleness, and steadiness create space for healing.

Notice:

- Does the home feel emotionally safe?
- Are loved ones speaking with calm and respect?
- Is the person being pressured, criticized, or rushed?
- Is there fear in the home that needs to be acknowledged?
- Are people talking about the person as if they are a problem to solve?
- Is shame present around food, substances, illness, or symptoms?
- Are family members regulated enough to offer support?
- Is there space for prayer, grief, quiet, and truth?

Supportive Shift:

Choose one:

- Reduce intense conversations
- Stop shame-based language
- Speak more slowly and gently
- Move problem-solving out of the recovery room
- Create a daily check-in
- Pray through the home
- Invite forgiveness or repair where appropriate
- Allow tears without trying to fix them
- Bring in outside support when the family system is overwhelmed

Reflection:

What emotional pattern is affecting recovery?

What conversation needs to soften?

What does the person need to hear or feel?

8. Family & Caregiver Support

The caregiver also needs care.

A depleted caregiver can unintentionally bring more stress into the home. Recovery works best when the people supporting the process are nourished, grounded, and clear.

Notice:

- Are caregivers eating enough?
- Are caregivers sleeping enough?
- Are family members overwhelmed or resentful?
- Are responsibilities clear?
- Is one person carrying too much?
- Are there boundaries around visitors, calls, and advice?
- Is someone helping with meals, cleaning, errands, or practical tasks?
- Is the caregiver allowed to rest?

Supportive Shift:

Choose one:

- Make a caregiver meal plan
- Assign practical tasks
- Limit unnecessary visitors
- Create a family communication rhythm
- Ask for help before burnout
- Schedule rest for the caregiver
- Prepare simple foods for everyone, not just the person recovering
- Create boundaries around advice and opinions

Reflection:

What does the caregiver need?

What task can be shared or removed?

Where is the family system overwhelmed?

9. Medical, Clinical & Safety Considerations

In-home recovery support is not a replacement for medical care, emergency detox, therapy, hospice, or clinical addiction treatment.

Some situations require medical supervision, clinical support, emergency care, or licensed providers.

Notice:

- Is the person medically stable?
- Is detox medically safe to do at home?
- Are there risks of withdrawal, seizures, self-harm, overdose, or medical crisis?
- Is the person able to eat, drink, breathe, sleep, and function safely?
- Are medications, appointments, or care instructions organized?
- Are emergency contacts written down?
- Is there a medical provider involved when needed?
- Does the family know when to call for help?

Supportive Shift:

Create a care safety list:

- Primary medical provider
- Emergency contact
- Current medications
- Allergies
- Detox or withdrawal risks
- Therapist or counselor if involved
- Hospice or home health if involved
- Nearest emergency care
- Family contact person
- Daily care notes

Reflection:

What needs medical or clinical oversight?

What is outside the scope of home support?

What safety information needs to be written down?

10. Your First Recovery Environment Reset

Start with the change that creates the most safety.

Choose one:

- Recovery room reset
- Kitchen and food reset
- Trigger removal
- Lighting reset
- Cleaning product reset
- Daily rhythm reset
- Family communication reset
- Caregiver support reset
- Medical/safety organization

My first reset area is:

One thing I will remove:

One thing I will replace:

One thing I will simplify:

One rhythm I will create:

One support I will ask for:

Closing Reflection

Recovery does not happen in isolation.

It happens in a body.

It happens in a home.

It happens inside rhythms, relationships, food, light, rest, prayer, and emotional safety.

The goal is not to force recovery.

The goal is to create the conditions where recovery becomes possible.

Gentle Note

This checklist is not medical advice, diagnosis, detox guidance, or treatment. It is a reflective tool to help you notice how the home, food, products, relationships, and daily rhythms may be supporting or disrupting recovery.

For personalized guidance, visit:

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Creating Sanctuary, Nurturing People, Inspiring Transformation