

Friday night can bring a sudden change in routine: work ends, responsibilities ease up, and familiar places or people may become part of the evening. If you are in recovery, that shift can make cravings feel stronger. A plan cannot promise that cravings will disappear, but it can make the next choice easier and help you get through the evening one step at a time.

The goal is structure without overload. You do not need to schedule every minute or build a perfect weekend. You need a few realistic supports, a way to respond if a craving shows up, and a backup plan if the first idea does not work. This guide walks through a practical **hour by hour plan** and shows how to build a repeatable **sober weekend plan** around your health, treatment, work, and family life.

Before Friday: Make the Plan Small Enough to Use

It is easier to make decisions before a craving is at its strongest. Choose a calm time earlier in the week to map out Friday evening. Keep the plan visible on your phone or on paper. Include only the information you are likely to need: where you will be, who you can contact, and what you will do if your first plan changes.

Start with these four questions:

- **When do cravings usually show up?** For example, after work, while driving past a familiar place, or when you are alone at home.
- **What situations make the evening harder?** These could include unplanned time, conflict, hunger, fatigue, or contact with people connected to past use.
- **Who can I reach out to?** Choose a supportive person, peer, sponsor, counselor, or treatment provider, depending on what is available to you.
- **What will I do if the craving grows?** Write down a specific next step, such as leaving a setting, calling someone, or going to a scheduled support meeting.

Try not to turn the list into a test of willpower. Cravings are experiences to respond to, not proof that you have failed. A useful plan gives you options and makes it easier to ask for support early.

Build a Friday-Night Plan Hour by Hour

Your schedule should fit your real life. The example below is a starting point, not a rule. Adjust it for your work hours, caregiving responsibilities, transportation, treatment appointments, and energy level. If you work evenings or have children at home, shift the times and keep the same basic sequence: transition, food, connection, planned activity, and wind-down.

Time Plan Why it may help 4:30–5:00 p.m. Finish work, check your plan, and contact your support person if you agreed to check in. A clear transition can reduce unplanned time after work. 5:00–6:00 p.m. Travel by a route that avoids known high-risk stops; get home or go to a planned activity. Deciding the route ahead of time removes one decision during a vulnerable period. 6:00–7:00 p.m. Eat a satisfying meal and drink water. Keep an easy backup meal available. Hunger and exhaustion can make it harder to use coping strategies. 7:00–8:30 p.m. Attend a support meeting, appointment, or planned activity with a supportive person. Connection and a set commitment can make the evening feel less open-ended. 8:30–9:30 p.m. Do a low-pressure activity: a walk in a safe place, a game, a show, a hobby, or a household task. A manageable activity can help you move through the evening without demanding too much. 9:30–10:00 p.m. Check in with yourself, set out what you need for Saturday, and begin your bedtime routine. Protecting rest supports a steadier start to the next day.

The plan does not have to be busy. Rest can be part of recovery. If a full evening of activities feels overwhelming, choose one anchor—such as dinner with a supportive person or a scheduled meeting—and keep the rest flexible.

What to Do When a Craving Shows Up

Cravings can feel urgent, but you can pause before acting on them. Use a short sequence you can remember, and take it one step at a time:

1. **Name what is happening.** Say to yourself, “I’m having a craving right now.” You do not need to argue with the feeling or judge yourself for having it.
2. **Change the immediate setting.** If you are near a person, place, or item connected to use, move somewhere safer. If you are driving, pull over somewhere appropriate and contact support before deciding where to go next.
3. **Contact someone.** Send a clear message such as, “Friday is feeling difficult. Can you talk with me for ten minutes or help me get to my next plan?”
4. **Meet a basic need.** Have a snack, drink water, take prescribed medication as directed, or get some rest if you are depleted. These steps are not a substitute for treatment; they can help you make the next decision.
5. **Choose one safe next action.** Go to your planned meeting, sit with a trusted person, take a short walk in a safe area, or contact your treatment provider. Focus on the next action rather than solving the whole weekend at once.

If you are worried you may harm yourself or someone else, or you may be in immediate danger, contact local emergency services. For a substance-related medical emergency, seek urgent medical care. If you have used after a period of reduced or no use, overdose risk can be serious; do not stay alone, and get emergency help if someone is unresponsive or having trouble breathing.

Make the Weekend Supportive, Not Overloaded

A sober weekend plan works best when it has structure and breathing room. Add a few anchors across Saturday and Sunday rather than filling every hour. Include sleep, meals, treatment or peer support, necessary responsibilities, and one enjoyable activity that does not revolve around substance use.



- **Sleep:** Aim for a regular bedtime and wake time where your circumstances allow. Prepare for sleep by reducing late-night stimulation and setting out what you need for the morning.
- **Diet and hydration:** Plan simple meals or snacks ahead of time. If cooking is too much, choose convenient options you can reliably access.
- **Appointments:** Put counseling, medical visits, and support meetings on your calendar. Add travel time and reminders so the appointment is easier to attend.
- **Connection:** Arrange one or two check-ins with people who respect your recovery goals. Decide when and how you will connect rather than relying on a last-minute message.
- **Flexibility:** Leave open time for rest and unexpected family or work needs. If an activity falls through, have a second option ready.

It may help to do a brief Sunday review: What supported you? What made the weekend harder? What one change would make next Friday more manageable? Keep the review practical and nonjudgmental. The aim is to learn what works for your life, not to grade yourself.



Match Treatment Intensity to Your Real Life

Treatment planning is not one-size-fits-all. Some people benefit from regular outpatient therapy, while others may need more frequent support through intensive outpatient programming or partial hospitalization. The right level depends on clinical needs, safety, recovery goals, and the support available outside treatment. A qualified clinician can help you assess options and revisit the plan as your needs change.

When considering a schedule, be honest about what you can attend consistently. Think through work shifts, transportation, childcare, caregiving, and the time needed to rest. A plan that looks ideal on paper but cannot fit your week may need adjustment. Ask a provider about appointment times, attendance expectations, telehealth availability where appropriate, and how to coordinate care if your schedule changes.

Marietta Spring Treatment Center is one resource to explore for information about treatment options: <https://mariettaspringtreatment.com/>. Use a provider's website as a starting point for questions, then contact the program directly to confirm current services, eligibility, availability, <https://www.windstream.net/finance/category/press/article/businessnewswire-2026-10-1-returning-to-everyday->

life-during-addiction-recovery and whether its approach fits your situation. If you are unsure where to begin, a primary care clinician or behavioral health professional may help you identify an appropriate next step.

Returning to Work Step by Step

Work can bring routine and income, but returning after treatment or time away can also take planning. Consider a gradual approach with your care team and, when relevant, the appropriate workplace contact. You do not need to share private medical details with coworkers. If you need to discuss scheduling or workplace support, focus on the practical arrangements you are requesting and share information only through suitable channels.

1. **Map your first week.** Write down work hours, treatment appointments, transportation, meals, and sleep. Look for avoidable clashes before the week begins.
2. **Identify support and boundaries.** Decide who you can contact outside work and what you will do if work stress triggers cravings. Keep personal recovery support separate from casual workplace conversations.
3. **Ask about available workplace resources.** Depending on your situation, this could include an employee assistance program, a return-to-work contact, or reasonable scheduling discussions. You can ask about processes without disclosing details to the wider team.
4. **Review the arrangement.** After the first few days, notice whether the schedule is manageable. Discuss needed changes with the relevant care or workplace contact rather than waiting until you are overwhelmed.

The CDC/NIOSH workplace-supported recovery resource offers information about recovery-supportive workplaces. It can help you learn about workplace approaches and frame questions for an employer or support program. It is not a substitute for individualized medical, legal, or employment advice.

Keep Your Plan Practical and Private

Think about it: planning sometimes involves costs, transportation, or schedule choices. Keep financial decisions separate from treatment decisions, and avoid assuming that any particular expense or market figure predicts recovery outcomes. For example, a hypothetical financial listing might read: TD 167.57 (-0.15%, -0.26) with \$1.34B volume. That kind of price-and-volume example is simply market information; it does not indicate whether a treatment choice is appropriate or affordable for you.

If cost is a barrier, ask providers about payment options, insurance, community services, or other available supports. Confirm details directly rather than relying on an online figure or general example. Your treatment team can help you weigh what is clinically appropriate alongside the practical limits of your week.

A Simple Checklist for This Friday

- Write down the time cravings are most likely to occur.
- Choose one supportive person and decide when you will check in.
- Plan your route, dinner, and one evening activity.
- Put appointments and support meetings on your calendar.
- Make a backup plan in case transportation, childcare, or an activity changes.
- Keep a short list of who to contact if the craving gets stronger.
- Set a realistic bedtime and leave some room to rest.

Your first Friday-night plan does not need to cover every possibility. Start with one evening, notice what helps, and adjust next week. A repeatable **hour by hour plan** can give the evening a shape without making it feel crowded.

With basic needs, appropriate treatment, and reachable support built in, a **sober weekend plan** can become more workable—one Friday and one decision at a time.