



The Rebound Effect

Substance Misuse Prevention Newsletter: A Collection of Readings

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Consequences of the Rebound Effect

The rebound effect will differ depending on the substances being used.

Fatigue

However, with most drugs, the individual will suffer from “withdrawal fatigue” (Hartney, 2020). Crippling fatigue can make it difficult to function in day-to-day life and interfere with a person’s ability to attend to obligations and achieve goals.

Worsening Mental Health

Withdrawal can worsen mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression (Hartney, 2020).

Post-Acute Withdrawal Syndrome (PAWS)

When someone repeatedly uses a significant quantity of a substance over a substantial period of time they may be at risk for developing PAWS (Crane, 2021). After going through acute withdrawal additional symptoms related to PAWS can linger for as long as a year (Crane, 2021). While these symptoms are not as severe as those experienced in acute withdrawal, they can still be bothersome and trigger someone to indulge or relapse with their substance of choice (Crane, 2021). While many different substances can result in PAWS, some of the most common ones include alcohol, marijuana, opioids, stimulants, and benzodiazepines (Crane, 2021).

When an individual is attempting to reduce or stop use. It is important to note that their acquired tolerance level begins to drop or return to initial baseline. This return to homeostasis is important and healing however, if an individual decides to return to use, they often return to the amount of

University Health and Counseling Services

A Brief Overview

Discontinuation of any substance, especially when used over time, will likely result in uncomfortable and sometimes even deadly withdrawal symptoms. Often this rebound effect will produce symptoms that the person was initially using the substance to escape from (Hartney, 2020). For example, upon discontinuation of a sedative someone will likely experience agitation (Hartney, 2020). To counteract this agitation, the person may choose to take more of the sedative to achieve a sense of calm (Hartney, 2020).

Individuals often report using **Cannabis** to calm anxiety or to sleep. While this seems to be effective for some individuals, over time anxiety can worsen (Hartney, 2021; National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA], 2020). The rebound effect with cannabis can increase anxiety which encourages more cannabis use resulting in an increased risk of developing a Cannabis Use Disorder or addiction. To learn more about the risks associated with marijuana use refer to the NIDA article listed below.

Individuals sometimes use **Alcohol** to counteract feelings of depression, anxiety, and sleep. Alcohol is a depressant and produces a biphasic response. The Biphasic response is twofold. In the initial phase an individual may feel stimulated and relaxed. However, once a person's blood alcohol content increases a depressant effect occurs (Massachusetts Institute of Technology [MIT], n.d.). The rebound effect of alcohol includes sleeplessness, anxiety, and depression, which encourages continued use to feel good. This increases the risk for developing an addiction.

As illustrated by these examples, this cycle of use can result in an addiction. Additionally, over time the person can build up a tolerance to the substance, which means that they will need to take more of the drug to achieve the desired effect. Consequently, the longer this cycle of use persists, the harder it is to break.

Articles

[The Comedown, Crash, or Rebound Effect of Drugs](#)

[Withdrawal Symptoms and the Rebound Effect](#)

[National Institute on Drug Abuse - Marijuana](#)

[The Truth Behind Common Beliefs about Marijuana](#)

[MIT Alcohol Info Page](#)

alcohol or drug that they had used previously. This is dangerous. Once the individual's tolerance level has dropped, returning to the same quantity that was used before places this individual at great risk for overdose.

Articles

[Post-Acute Withdrawal Syndrome \(PAWS\): An In-Depth Guide](#)

Signs & Symptoms of PAWS

- Irritability
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Mood Swings
- Fatigue
- Lack of energy
- Insomnia
- Disrupted sleep
- Poor focus
- Decreased libido
- Pain

Crane (2021)

Campus Resources

Assess your Risk using ScreenU

[ScreenU Links](#)

Recovery Oriented Campus Center

[ROCC Services & Event Calendar](#)

Counseling & Health Services

[Substance Use Information](#)

[A New Trail, Early Recovery Group](#)

Definitions

Dependence: When someone's body begins to rely on a drug, resulting in withdrawal symptoms when the drug is discontinued

Addiction: Inability to stop using a drug despite experiencing negative consequences related to the drug use

National Institute on Drug Abuse, (2017)

Ways to Reduce your Risk

Seek Support

Lean on family, friends and seek out other means of support to help you limit, reduce, or abstain from substances. Informing your healthcare provider can be a good way to obtain additional resources, such as local support groups (Harvard Health Publishing, 2021). Sometimes when an individual is trying to reduce their use of substances, they discover their anxiety or depression sabotages their efforts to reduce use and meet their goals to change. It may be helpful to seek a medication evaluation to see if medication would be beneficial. The use of substances can sometimes trigger a mental health issue, so when you're ready to reduce use and if you're finding this is difficult, it may be helpful to see a provider for an evaluation. A counselor at USM Counseling center can help with this.

Alter your Surroundings

Removing yourself from settings that involve substances is often a key factor in reducing or eliminating substances from one's life. This removes temptations and allows you to focus on other life goals. For example, you may choose to hang out with a different group of friends who do not use substances. Or someone might remove all alcohol related objects (e.g., beer glasses, wine openers) from their home (Harvard Health Publishing, 2021). The phrase "out of sight, out of mind", rings true in this scenario.

Reduce or Eliminate Use

Rethinking why and how much of a substance you use is an important part of determining if reducing or eliminating the use of a substance is warranted. The less someone uses, the more likely they will avoid the rebound effect. Stopping or reducing use can be very difficult and sometimes life threatening depending on the substance and how much someone is using. This why asking for help is so important. A trained professional can help you safely navigate how to reduce or eliminate substance use.

Articles

[Preventing Drug Misuse and Addiction](#)

[Drugs, Brains & Behavior](#)

[5 Action Steps for Quitting an Addiction](#)

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