

How to break free from porn

I'm proud of you for taking your pursuit of freedom in Christ seriously! Before we get into practical steps for breaking free, I want to share some statistics. Why? Because we won't feel the urgency for change unless we acknowledge there's a problem.

- Pornography accounts for 23% of retail sales online. 40 million people visit porn sites daily.
- Porn revenue is larger than all combined revenues of ALL the NFL, MLB, and NBA franchises.
- Pornography accounts for 70 billion dollars a year worldwide, 13 billion dollars here in the United States.
- Pornographic websites 4.2 million (12% of total websites)
- Daily pornographic search engine requests 68 million (25% of total search engine requests)
- Average age of first Internet exposure to pornography 11 years old
- Men admitting to accessing pornography at work 20%
- Women keeping their cyber activities secret 70%
- Women who struggle with pornography addiction 17%
- As many as 100,000 U.S. children are forcefully engaged in prostitution or porn each year.
- The sale of child porn has become a \$3 billion industry.
- 55% of all internet child porn comes from the U.S.

We need help!

On the next page, you'll find some practical steps to help you if you're struggling with pornography. These steps are simple, but they will be the hardest things you've ever done. Many people refuse to do this because it's too inconvenient or difficult, but I ask you this: Hasn't an addiction to porn been inconvenient and difficult? Hasn't it interfered with your relationships? Why not choose a different inconvenience that will help lead you to freedom in Christ? Are you ready? Are you serious? Let's go.

1. Cut out all access

Matthew 5:29-31 – NLT - So if your eye—even your good eye^[a]—causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your hand—even your stronger hand^[b]—causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell

This is where the rubber meets the road. This isn't the only step, but this step gives you some breathing room. Porn is a legitimate physical and spiritual addiction that needs to be broken.

When a person is aroused by porn, their brain releases a chemical called dopamine that makes them feel pleasure. As dopamine goes through the brain, it leaves behind a pathway created by a protein called iFosB that connects feeling aroused to looking at porn. The protein goes to work to build a pathway to make it easier for the person to do it again.

When a person keeps looking at porn, their brain is flooded with high levels of dopamine. A healthy brain isn't used to that amount, so it responds by getting rid of some of its dopamine receptors, which take in dopamine that's released, so that the brain knows it's there. WITH FEWER RECEPTORS, the user can't feel the dopamine's effect as much, and suddenly the porn that used to REALLY EXCITE starts losing its effect.

It becomes a vicious cycle. To get the same level of pleasure, they need to increase the amount of porn and look at it more often or more graphic porn. It is literally like a drug. As a result, you need to detox and fight through withdrawals. Jesus gives the best advice: remove it completely.

If you access it on your smartphone, then get a Wise Phone or a Flip Phone so you can't access anything. If it's on your computer, then have your spouse or family member be the only one with the password. They will need to log you in to use the computer. If it's on the TV, then cancel cable or streaming subscriptions. Put parental controls on your TV and have someone else hold the password. Is this 100% foolproof? Of course not, but it can help create some breathing room and give you time to walk in sobriety.

2. Dive deep into the love of God

As Mark DeJesus has said, the healing journey starts with experiencing the unconditional love of God. "Learning to experience unconditional love. Experiencing the love of Father God. Getting rooted in the grace of Christ. Practicing loving, self-compassion in how you relate to yourself. Experiencing the healing power of nurture."

The truth is that our porn addiction reflects a deeper issue within our hearts. The more we genuinely experience God's love, it won't give us permission to do whatever we want; instead, it will encourage us to draw closer to Him. God's unconditional love is more powerful than anything else in this world.

Start memorizing some verses about God's love. Repeat them every morning and every night before bed. If you need some suggestions to get started, you can memorize Ephesians 2:4-5 or Psalm 145:8.

Shifting your thinking from performance-based acceptance to the unconditional love of the Father is a journey or process. You will have good days and bad days. Keep focusing on His love. Receive it. Believe it. Thank Him for it. .

3. Invest in an internet blocker/accountability software

Accountability software will email a weekly report to your accountability partner. It will also block pornographic material from your computer. Once again, it isn't 100% successful, but it helps to have a shield when you go into battle. Here are a few good options.

- a. Covenant Eyes - <https://www.covenanteyes.com> - \$184 a year
- b. Ever Accountable - <https://everaccountable.com> - \$129 a year
- c. Accountable2You - <https://accountable2you.com> - \$121 a year

4. Find someone to share everything with

The more you hold on to secrets, the more control the enemy has over your mind and heart. Find a close, trusted friend and share honestly. Seek out a Christian counselor to talk to. Ask this person to pray with you and for you as you walk through your healing journey. If you are married, it is recommended by Dr. Ted Roberts to wait until you have six months of sobriety before sharing with your spouse.

This is not an exhaustive resource, but some simple steps to help you start your path toward freedom. I am proud of you and believe in you! God is with you and supports you.

**Stats and thoughts adapted from XXX Church and Fight The New Drug.*