

What Is a Medication Taper?

A safer way to reduce or stop psychiatric medications

What “Tapering” Means

A taper is the process of gradually lowering the dose of a medication over time, rather than stopping it suddenly.

The goal is to:

- Give the brain and body time to adjust to this major change
- Lower the risk of withdrawal symptoms
- Support stability you can keep functioning day to day

A Safe Taper Is Personalized

There is no single “right” taper for everyone.

A thoughtful taper takes into account:

- How long you’ve been on the medication
- The dose and formulation
- Past withdrawal experiences
- Current symptoms and stressors
- Amount of support from loved ones
- Work, family, social obligations
- Overall physical and mental health

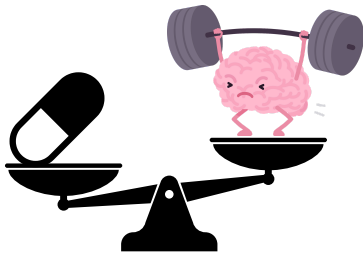
The Basics of a Taper

- A safe taper can take months - years
- Custom doses can be made using a compounding pharmacy
- Doses are lowered by very small amounts (5-10%)
- Doses are reduced slowly, with time to assess symptoms between changes
- Microtapering uses very small daily reductions

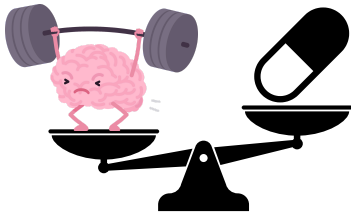
Why Medications Shouldn't Be Stopped Suddenly



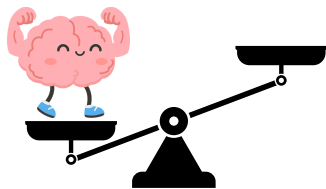
The brain always tries to stay in balance.



When a medication pushes one brain system in the same direction all the time, the brain often responds by strengthening the opposing system to restore balance.



Over time, this can make the medication seem less effective, even if the dose hasn't changed.



If the medication is then stopped suddenly, the brain's adjustments are still in place. Without the medication to counter them, these changes can lead to withdrawal symptoms, because one system is now acting strongly without anything to balance it.



Possible effects of stopping too fast can include:

- Anxiety or panic, fear of leaving the house
- Sleep disruption
- Mood changes, new obsessive thoughts, new suicidal thoughts
- Flu-like symptoms or digestive distress (such as nausea or irritable bowel symptoms)
- Neurological symptoms such as tingling or burning sensations, dizziness, headaches, or ringing in the ears

Withdrawal symptoms can mimic many medical or psychiatric conditions, which is one reason they are often difficult for general clinicians to recognize.

These reactions are common and frequently misunderstood. They can sometimes feel more severe than the symptoms the medication was originally prescribed to treat.