

# Complementary Therapies

To Customize Your  
Treatment Plan



SILVER RIDGE

A PREMIER PROGRAM BY PYRAMID HEALTHCARE

# Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	3
WHY COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES? .....	5
ART THERAPY.....	7
MUSIC THERAPY .....	9
HORTICULTURAL THERAPY .....	11
ADVENTURE THERAPY .....	14
BIOFEEDBACK .....	16
NEUROFEEDBACK .....	18
MEDITATION .....	21
MASSAGE THERAPY .....	23
ACUPUNCTURE .....	26
YOGA .....	28
COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES ROUND OUT YOUR TREATMENT PLAN .....	30

## Introduction

Substance abuse can quickly spiral out of control, or it can slowly chip away at everything good in your life. Either way, professional help is almost always needed to overcome an addiction for the long-term.<sup>1</sup>

This is because addiction changes the way your brain functions, and it affects your thought and behavior patterns. Successful recovery requires re-learning healthy ways of thinking and behaving. It requires addressing the underlying issues that led to substance abuse in the first place. And it requires finding joy, purpose and meaning in a life without drugs or alcohol.

There is no single pathway to recovery, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, but a holistic approach that includes both traditional and complementary therapies offers the best possible outcomes. What works for one individual may not work for another, which is why an

individualized treatment plan is crucial for success.

A holistic program addresses a wide range of issues related to your physical, mental and spiritual health. A high-quality treatment program will offer an individualized, holistic recovery plan that draws on both traditional and complementary therapies for whole-person healing.

Cognitive-behavioral therapy is the most commonly used traditional therapy in addiction treatment. This "talk" therapy helps you evaluate your thoughts, ideas, attitudes and beliefs and identify those that are unhealthy. It helps you learn to replace these with healthier ways of behaving and thinking about your addiction, yourself and the world around you. It also helps you develop a toolkit of skills and strategies to address issues like cravings, stress and other powerful triggers for relapse.

Complementary therapies are those which don't fall into the mainstream. Complementary therapies aren't generally effective on their own for treating addiction, but when used along with traditional therapies, they help you look at old problems in new ways and from a variety of angles. Most are potent stress relievers, which is essential in recovery.

Here, we will examine ten complementary therapies commonly used in an addiction treatment setting. Adding one or more of these to your treatment plan will enhance your experience in treatment and improve your chances of long-term sobriety.





A photograph of two men sitting on a grey sofa in a modern office environment. The man on the left, with short brown hair and a beard, is wearing a purple long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans. He is gesturing with his hands while speaking. The man on the right, with a beard and short dark hair, is wearing a blue and yellow plaid shirt and dark pants. He is listening attentively. In the background, there is a wooden shelf with white binders and small potted plants. Large windows provide a view of a city skyline. A dark blue rectangular box with white text is overlaid on the bottom center of the image.

## Why Complementary Therapies?



Complementary therapies have numerous benefits for people in recovery, according to a study by the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors.<sup>2</sup> They improve engagement and retention in treatment, and they offer improved treatment outcomes. They help you develop essential skills to reduce your risk of relapse, and they improve your overall health and well-being.

**Specific benefits of complementary therapies for addiction recovery include:**

- Stress relief
- Greater self-awareness
- Greater spiritual awareness
- Improved mood
- Improved social functioning
- Decreased symptoms of mental illness

Complementary therapies enhance your treatment experience and help you get the most benefits from treatment. The following are just the beginning of a long list of complementary therapies that can help you end your addiction and improve your life across all domains.





A photograph of three women in an art studio. The woman in the foreground is smiling and painting on a canvas. She is wearing a headband and an apron. Two other women are in the background, also smiling and painting. The studio has a brick wall and shelves with art supplies.

# Art Therapy



Art therapy helps you express yourself through creative exercises that help you to make sense of difficult emotions and experiences. Creating art provides a non-verbal way to tell your story in a new and different way. Viewing art and talking about it with a one-on-one therapist or a therapy group moves you away from an internal, contemplative state and into an external, active state. This improves communication skills and promotes self-reflection.

During a typical art therapy session, you will create art that reflects your emotional state. You'll use color and lines to express yourself and communicate your experiences. You may also review pieces of art and make connections to your own life.

Art therapy is one of the most common complementary therapies used in addiction treatment, with nearly 37 percent of programs offering it. A large body of research shows that art therapy helps to heal emotional wounds through deep self-reflection and a higher level of self-awareness.<sup>3</sup> It also helps to reduce stress, ease feelings of guilt and shame and promote healthier thought and behavior patterns.



A photograph of a woman with long brown hair, wearing a light blue sweater, smiling broadly while looking at a man. The man, with a beard and wearing a grey sweater, is seated at a piano, playing the keys. The background is a warm, indoor setting with a wooden staircase and a potted plant. A dark blue rectangular box with a white center is overlaid on the image, containing the text "Music Therapy".

# Music Therapy

Music therapy promotes positive emotional states, and it helps you relax and reduce stress. A study published in the *Journal of Addictions Nursing* found that moving to music reduces negative states and counters emotions like anger, depression, anxiety and stress.<sup>4</sup> The study also found that music therapy increases your motivation to recover and improves your level of engagement in treatment.

A music therapist is a highly trained professional with at least a bachelor's degree in music therapy. During music therapy, participants engage with music on a variety of levels. Listening to music, moving to it and even creating

music is the basis of music therapy. You may analyze song lyrics, make improvised music that reflects your emotional state and listen to music that helps you explore and work through difficult emotions and experiences. Music therapy in a group setting helps individuals improve their self-esteem and communicate with each other in new, healthy ways. It promotes effective self-expression and a higher level of self-awareness.



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a grey cardigan over a white top, is smiling and holding a small potted plant with pink flowers. She is wearing colorful, patterned gardening gloves. The background is a lush garden with tall green grasses and other plants. A dark blue rectangular box with a white border is overlaid on the image, containing the text "Horticultural Therapy".

# Horticultural Therapy





Horticultural therapy takes place in the garden. As participants engage in gardening activities, a licensed horticultural therapist helps them make connections between working with plants and their own experiences. Horticultural therapy was used in the 1950s on hospitalized war veterans to help improve their physical and mental health, and since then, numerous studies have shown the clear benefits of this therapy.



Virginia Tech Professor of Horticulture Diane Relf cites many other proven benefits of horticultural therapy in an article published in the Journal of Rehabilitation:<sup>5</sup>

- It promotes healthy interpersonal relationships.
- It improves self-awareness.
- It improves and stabilizes mood.
- It deepens an understanding of relationships and the ability to evaluate them.
- It promotes planning and decision-making.
- It improves self-confidence and self-esteem.
- It provides an outlet for negative emotions.
- It offers opportunities for creativity and self-expression.
- It relieves stress.

Horticultural therapy can include a wide range of activities, from digging and planting to flower arranging and making garden art. Some activities are tranquil, like planting and tending to plants. Others, like digging and clipping hedges, offer an outlet for strong emotions. During sessions, a licensed horticultural therapist helps group members make connections to their own lives through group projects and solo pursuits.

A photograph of a woman and a man hiking in a forest. The woman, in the foreground, has blonde, wavy hair and is wearing a pink jacket and a backpack. She is looking upwards and to the right. The man, in the background, is wearing glasses and a blue jacket, and is smiling. The background is filled with green trees and foliage.

# Adventure Therapy



Adventure therapy takes place in the wilderness. Outdoor activities can vary depending on the program and may include everything from camping, hiking and kayaking to caving, climbing and cross-country skiing. The wide-open spaces enjoyed during adventure therapy offer an inspiring environment for addressing a variety of issues. And in fact, the environment itself is part of the therapy, inspiring hope and motivation and promoting self-awareness and a sense of belonging. Plenty of time is spent reflecting, and cooperative tasks help build trust and personal accountability among participants.

A study published in the *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment* found that outdoor adventures help reduce the risk of relapse and relieve cravings as well as lower the frequency of negative thoughts.<sup>6</sup> People who engage in adventure therapy improve their decision-making skills, learn important coping and problem-solving skills and build on their communication skills. Adventure therapy has also been shown to improve engagement in treatment, especially for people who are ambivalent toward recovery.

Adventure therapy is led by a licensed therapist who helps participants make connections between the lessons learned in nature and their own recovery, including the logical consequences of personal choices.







# Biofeedback



Stress is a major underlying factor for substance abuse, and it's an important risk factor for relapse. Reducing stress is a strong focus in treatment, and biofeedback is an effective therapy for helping you reduce levels of the stress hormone cortisol in your blood and improve your body's stress response on the spot.

During biofeedback therapy, a therapist attaches sensors to your body. The physiological information picked up by the sensors—including body temperature, muscle tension, heart rate and blood pressure—is displayed on a monitor. The therapist teaches you a variety of relaxation techniques that change these body functions as you watch on the

monitor. You learn to "read" your body, recognize stress cues and reduce your stress response. Biofeedback also helps increase psychological confidence, and it can reduce the intensity of cravings and other triggers.

Some of the techniques used to reduce the body's stress response include guided imagery, mindful meditation, progressive relaxation and deep breathing exercises. These exercises can also help you maintain a better mood as well as improve your overall physical and mental health and quality of life.



## Neurofeedback



Neurofeedback is a very specialized type of biofeedback that involves monitoring brain waves. Your brain wave patterns are ever changing, depending on your activities.

**Gamma waves**, the fastest brain waves, are associated with processing memories and forming ideas.

**Beta waves**, the next fastest, are associated with a wide-awake state that's normal during daytime hours.

**Alpha waves**, which are slower still, indicate an awake, relaxed state that occurs just before you fall asleep and just after awakening.

**Theta waves** indicate light sleep or a hypnotic state.

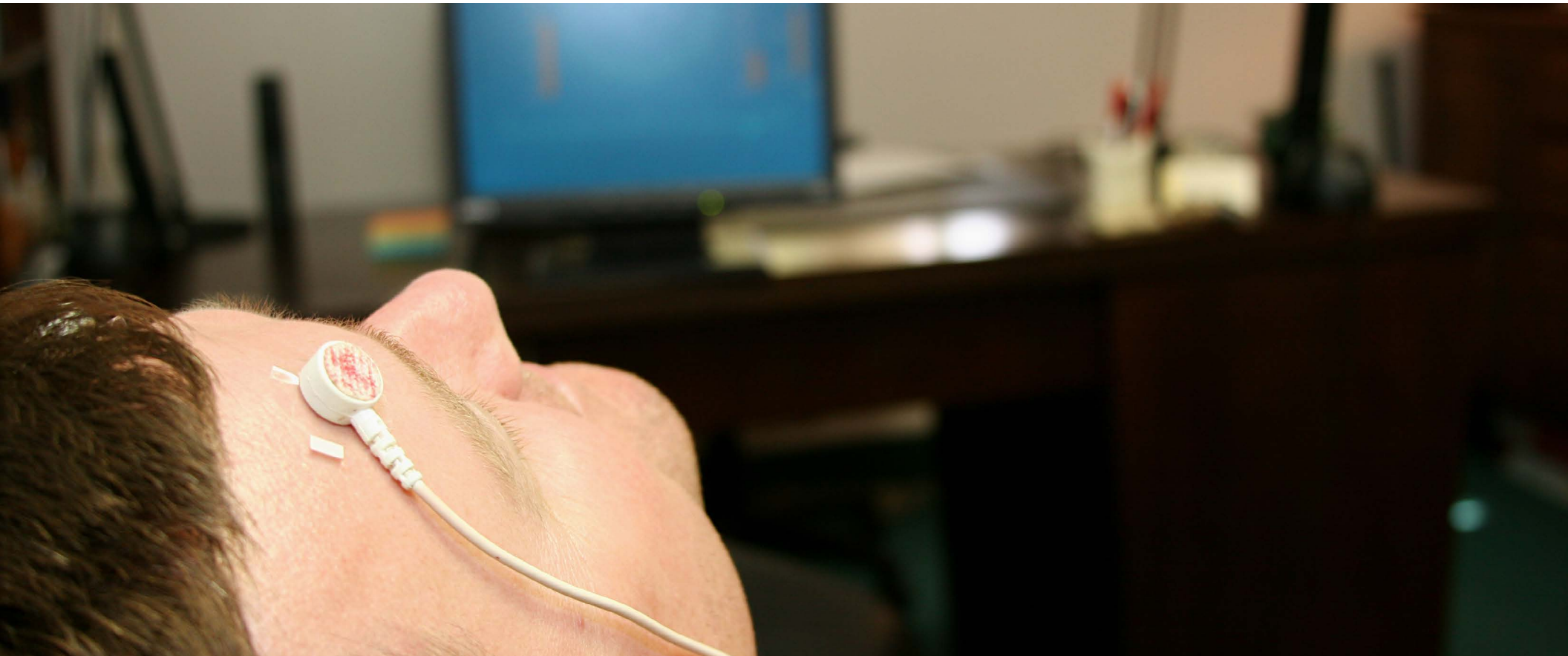
**Delta waves**, the slowest, occur during the deep, dreamless stage of sleep.

Malfunctioning brain waves can cause a range of psychological problems. Insufficient beta activity or increased alpha activity, for example, can indicate depression or ADHD, and extreme alpha wave activity may cause anxiety. Neurofeedback retrains your brain wave patterns by feeding them into software that assesses brain wave function and sends periodic signals to the brain to reset itself and change the psychological state.



During neurofeedback therapy, you'll relax or engage in various exercises to bring on certain wave patterns. The software does the rest of the work.

Research shows that neurofeedback—especially when used along with psychotherapy—is an effective way to treat mental illnesses like anxiety disorders, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder that can make recovery difficult.







Meditation

Meditation puts you in an alpha wave state, where you're relaxed and focused, and your brain is more open to creative ideas. Research by MIT and Harvard found that people who meditated every day for eight weeks were able to better control their alpha waves to dramatically reduce overall stress.<sup>7</sup>

There are several types of meditation, but the type most commonly used in a treatment program is mindfulness-based stress reduction. Mindfulness promotes awareness of your thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations. Practitioners of MBSR learn through meditation to acknowledge and accept their experiences and emotions rather than try to suppress them. This approach helps to facilitate better choices, and it's been shown to reduce cravings and interrupt the tendency to abuse substances during periods of stress or emotional unrest. An ever-growing body of research shows MBSR is an effective complementary therapy for treating addiction.<sup>8</sup>

### Specific benefits of meditation of any kind include:

- Lower blood pressure
- Improved immune function
- Pain relief
- Reduced anxiety and depression
- A higher level of self-awareness
- Reduced stress response
- Feelings of calm and inner peace





## Massage Therapy



Massage therapy is another therapy that's helpful for people who have a mental illness that co-occurs with an addiction. Getting symptoms of a mental illness under control is essential for successful long-term recovery.

Research shows a massage therapy program results in a significant reduction in symptoms associated with depression, anxiety, chronic stress and anorexia nervosa.<sup>9</sup>



While researchers aren't sure why massage therapy has such an important impact on symptoms of mental illness, it's widely believed that it's due to reduced levels of the stress hormone cortisol as well as increases in serotonin and oxytocin levels. Serotonin, a neurotransmitter, helps to stabilize your mood and promote high-quality sleep. Oxytocin, a hormone, produces feelings of relaxation and mental stability and has anti-anxiety effects.

**The best types of massage therapy for mental health benefits and relaxation include:**

**Hot stone massage**, which involves placing hot stones on areas of the body to send heat deep for optimum relaxation benefits

**Shiatsu massage**, which manipulates acupressure points to improve the way energy flows through the body

**Swedish massage**, which involves long massage strokes, deep kneading and stretching to ease muscle tension and improve blood circulation.



A photograph showing a person lying face down on a massage table, receiving acupuncture. A practitioner's hands are visible, inserting a needle into the person's upper back. Several other needles are already in place on the back and neck. The background is softly blurred, showing a clinical or spa setting with a large exercise ball and a potted plant.

# Acupuncture



Acupuncture is an age-old Chinese practice that involves inserting long, thin needles into the skin at certain points of the body. This is thought to stimulate the flow of energy through the body and promote the release of mood-enhancing brain chemicals like serotonin and dopamine. It stimulates the muscles, connective tissues and nerves to improve the function of various body systems, including the digestive, nervous and immune systems.

The University of California at San Diego's Center for Integrative Medicine cites hundreds of clinical studies that have found acupuncture effective for improving sleep and reducing symptoms associated with a wide range of

physical and mental health conditions.<sup>10</sup> According to the National Institutes of Health, these include depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia and withdrawal from drugs or alcohol.

Acupuncture administered by a certified, experienced practitioner ensures a pain-free experience with a low risk of side effects. An acupuncture session can leave you feeling deeply relaxed or energized, depending on the focus of the session.



Yoga





In recent years, yoga has become a mainstream practice that has numerous documented benefits for physical and mental health. It's widely used in high-quality treatment programs to promote balance and flexibility of mind, body and spirit.

Yoga involves shifting body poses that follow your breathing patterns. It brings your attention into the present moment, where you can better evaluate your state of mind and how your body feels. With regular practice, this mindfulness carries over to other areas of your life and goes a long way toward preventing relapse.

**Other benefits of yoga are many and include:**

- Lower stress
- Reduced blood pressure, heart rate and muscle tension
- Improved immune system function
- Stronger muscles and greater physical flexibility
- Relief from symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Greater self-awareness
- Emotional healing

Many yoga instructors incorporate aromatherapy into the practice or offer inspiring messages of hope and peace. Daily yoga leaves you feeling calm, grounded and energized.



A photograph of three men smiling outdoors. The man in the center is a white male with grey hair, wearing a green polo shirt. To his left is a Black male wearing a blue polo shirt. To his right is a close-up of a third man's face, partially visible. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green foliage and a string of colorful triangular flags.

# Complementary Therapies

Round Out Your  
Treatment Plan





A holistic approach to recovery that includes one or more complementary therapies is highly beneficial in many ways. The lessons learned and the skills gained through engaging in these therapies often extend beyond the addiction to help you improve other areas of your life.

Finding joy, purpose and meaning in a life of sobriety is central to long-term successful recovery. Many complementary therapies help you identify your inherent strengths and values and re-kindle passion, curiosity and hope for the future.

Regardless of your pathway to recovery, complementary therapies can play an important role in restoring your physical and mental health and well-being. Choose the therapies that you feel drawn to or which fulfill a specific need in your life. Engage fully with your therapy, and keep an open mind. You'll find that these therapies perfectly complement the more traditional therapies included in your plan for far-reaching personal growth and whole-person healing.

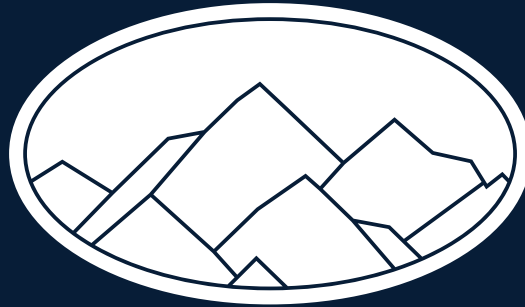
# Sources

1. Understanding Drug Use and Addiction. (2016, August). Retrieved from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/understanding-drug-use-addiction>
2. Traditional, Alternative, or Complementary Therapies, in Addiction Treatment (TATAC) Report: National and State Profiles. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://nasadad.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Traditional-Alternative-or-Complementary-Therapies-in-Addiction-Treatment-TATAC-Report-National-and-State-Profiles-2001.pdf>
3. Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. (2010, February). The Connection Between Art, Healing, and Public Health: A Review of Current Literature. *American Journal of Public Health*, 100(2), 254-263. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2804629/>
4. Aletraris, L., Paino, M., Bond Edmond, M., Roman, P. M., & Bride, B. E. (2014, October). The Use of Art and Music Therapy in Substance Abuse Treatment Programs. *Journal of Addiction Nursing*, 25(4), 190-196. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4268880/>
5. Relf, D. (n.d.). Horticulture: A Therapeutic Tool. Retrieved from <http://www.hort.vt.edu/HUMAN/ht5a.html>
6. Bennett, L. W., Cardone, S., & Jarczyk, J. (1998). Effects of a Therapeutic Camping Program on Addiction Recovery. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 15(5), 469-74, Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9751006>



# Sources

7. Trafton, A. (2011, May 5). The Benefits of Meditation. Retrieved from <http://news.mit.edu/2011/meditation-0505>
8. Marcus, M. T., & Zgierska, A. (2009, October). Mindfulness-Based Therapies for Substance Use Disorders: Part 1 (Editorial). *Substance Abuse*, 30(4), 263. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2818765/>
9. Massage Therapy for Depression. (2010, August 23). Retrieved from <https://womensmentalhealth.org/posts/massage-therapy-for-depression/>
10. How Acupuncture Can Relieve Pain and Improve Sleep, Digestion and Emotional Well-Being. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://cim.ucsd.edu/clinical-care/acupuncture.shtml>



# SILVER RIDGE

---

A PREMIER PROGRAM BY PYRAMID HEALTHCARE

Silver Ridge serves established midlife adults who need to retreat discreetly from their daily lives. Here, we provide the perfect setting to focus on the addictions compromising your relationships, your future and your legacy.

**Every great legacy has a strong foundation. Build yours here.**