Examples of negative reinforcement

Negative reinforcement can be one of the trickier concepts to grasp. Don’t forget that positive reinforcers strengthen a response by presenting a positive stimulus after a response. Negative reinforcers strengthen a response by removing an aversive (unpleasant) stimulus.

As you go through the list, identify the aversive stimulus and the behavior being strengthened by its removal.

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| Example | Aversive stimulus | Behavior being strengthened |
| 1. Taking aspirin to relieve a headache |  |  |
| 1. Hurrying home in the winter to get out of the cold |  |  |
| 1. Giving in to an argument or to a dog’s begging |  |  |
| 1. Fanning oneself to escape the heat |  |  |
| 1. Leaving a movie theater if the movie is bad |  |  |
| 1. Smoking in order to relieve anxiety |  |  |
| 1. Following prison rules in order to be released from confinement |  |  |
| 1. Feigning a stomachache in order to avoid school |  |  |
| 1. Putting on a car safety belt to stop an irritating buzz |  |  |
| 1. Turning down the volume of a very loud radio |  |  |
| 1. Putting up an umbrella to escape the rain |  |  |
| 1. Saying “uncle” to stop being beaten |  |  |