

Five keys for quitting

Studies have shown that these five steps will help you quit and quit for good. You have the best chances of quitting if you use them together.

1. Get ready.
2. Get support.
3. Learn new skills and behaviors.
4. Get medication and use it correctly.
5. Be prepared for relapse or difficult situations.



Photo courtesy
by
Konrad Mostert

1. Get ready

- Set a quit date.
- Change your environment.
 - Throw out **ALL** cigarettes and ashtrays in your home, car, and place of work.
 - Ask visitors not to smoke in your home.
- Look at your past attempts to quit. Think about what worked and what did not.
- Once you quit, don't smoke again -- **NOT EVEN A PUFF!**

2. Get support

Research shows that you have a better chance of being successful if you have help. You can get support in many ways:

- Tell your family, friends, and co-workers that you are going to quit and want their support. Ask them not to smoke around you or leave cigarettes out in front of you.
- Talk to your health care provider (for example, doctor, dentist, nurse, pharmacist, psychologist, or smoking counselor).
- Get individual, group, or telephone counseling. The more counseling you have, the better your chances are of quitting. Find a program at a local hospital or health center. Call your local health department for information about programs in your area.

3. Learn new skills

- Try to distract yourself from urges to smoke. Talk to someone, go for a walk, or get busy with a task.
- When you first try to quit, change your routine. Take a different route to work. Drink tea instead of coffee. Eat breakfast in a different place.
- Try to reduce your stress. Take a hot bath, exercise, or read a book.
- Plan to do something every day that makes you happy.
- Drink a lot of water and other fluids.

4. Get medication

- Medications can help you reduce some of your urges to smoke.
- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved these medications to help you quit smoking: the patch, nicotine gum, nicotine lozenges (available over the counter) and a nicotine inhaler, nasal spray, Chantix and Zyban/Bupropion (all available by prescription)
- Ask your health care provider for advice and carefully read the information on the package.
- These medications can double your chances of quitting and quitting for good.
- Everyone who is trying to quit may benefit from using a medication. If you are pregnant or trying to become pregnant, nursing, under age 18, smoking fewer than 10 cigarettes per day, or have a medical condition, talk to your doctor or other health care provider before taking medications.

5. Be prepared

Most relapses happen within the first three months after quitting. Don't be discouraged if you start smoking again. Remember, most people try to quit several times before they are successful. Here are some difficult situations to watch for:

- **Alcohol.** Avoid drinking alcohol. Drinking lowers your chances of success.
- **Other Smokers.** Being around smoking can make you want to smoke.
- **Weight Gain.** Many smokers will gain weight when they quit, usually less than 10 pounds. Eat a healthy diet and stay active. Don't let weight gain distract you from your main goal quitting smoking. Some quit-smoking medications may help delay weight gain.
- **Bad Mood or Depression.** Find other ways to improve your mood besides smoking: talk to a friend, family member or counselor; start a new hobby; exercise or go for a walk outside.

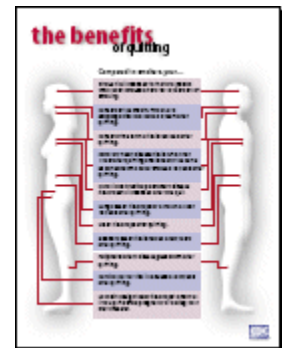
If you are having problems with any of these situations, talk to your doctor or other health care provider.

Learning to cope

Preventing urges

You can prepare for tempting situations before they arise.

- Plan ahead. Know what you will do in any given situation before you encounter it. Practice that plan often
- Avoid the situation until you feel you can deal with it.
- Change the routines you associate with smoking as much as possible
- Keep yourself busy. Avoid boring situations where you may begin to think about smoking.
- Remind yourself often that you are happy being a nonsmoker.



"The Benefits of Quitting" poster from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

When a craving hits: General suggestions

- Deep Breathing. Every time an urge hits take in a slow deep breath, hold it for three to five seconds and then slowly exhale.
- Drink some water.
- Talk about the urge. Call your support person or let people around you know you need to talk for a few minutes.
- Escape the situation. Leave until you feel comfortable going back.
- Say to yourself, "I am in control" or "I can get through this."
- Just accept the thought. It's natural that you will have thoughts about cigarettes once you quit. Don't make a big deal out of them. Say to yourself "So what" and let the thought go.

After meals

- Get up from the table as soon as you are done eating
- Brush your teeth right away after every meal
- Avoid restaurants that allow smoking, or sit in the nonsmoking section
- Take a short walk after each meal

Alcohol

- Explore alternative ways to socialize with friends
- Remind yourself that you can have fun without drinking. Millions of people do it all the time!
- If you do choose to drink, try changing what you usually drink, and limiting yourself to one or two drinks.

Boredom

- Always carry a book/newspaper/puzzle with you
- Plan ahead so that you will not have long periods of inactivity
- Use idle time to make the grocery list, plan your schedule or write letters
- Start a new hobby or begin an exercise program to fill the time

Car

- Choose a slightly different route for routine trips
- Remove the ashtray from the car
- Listen to the radio or books on tape to keep your mind occupied
- Use public transportation for the first few weeks after you quit
- Change the environment in the car. Clean the entire interior, get new seat covers, put up a no smoking sign, etc.

Coffee

- Drink a flavored coffee or a different brand
- If you always have your morning coffee at home, have it at a café or at work
- Drink tea or a different beverage for the first few weeks instead of coffee

Evenings

- Find projects to do while at home. Clean out the basement, refinish furniture, etc.
- Keep yourself occupied while watching TV. Do puzzles, make out the grocery list, read a magazine
- Visit family or friends instead of staying at home
- Begin a new hobby, or volunteer
- Start an exercise program. If you can't do anything else, take a brisk half hour walk each night

Hand/mouth

- Use cinnamon sticks (the kind used for cider)
- Suck on sugar free candy or chew sugar free gum
- Use straws/ swizzle sticks/ tooth picks
- Eat carrots, celery sticks, grapes, or other healthy snacks

Living with another smoker

- Negotiate with the other smoker about where and when he/she will smoke. Do not make demands
- Have the other smoker keep his/her cigarettes where you will not be able to find them
- Give the smoker one ashtray. They will keep this ashtray clean and out of your sight when not in use
- Surprise the smoker with a special dinner or gift at the end of your first month of quitting to thank them for their support

Morning routine

- Change the order of your routine
- Jump into the shower as soon as you get up
- Eat something for breakfast if you normally do not
- Look in the mirror first thing each morning and say, "I'm proud to be a nonsmoker!"

Other smokers

- Avoid places where you know people are smoking for the first few weeks of your quit
- Leave the scene from time to time if you have to be in a smoking environment
- Politely explain to the person that you are trying to quit and ask them not to smoke around you
- Realize that the smoker is not happier or having more fun than you are just because they are smoking

Parties/socializing

- Before you go, develop and practice a plan to deal with situation
- Rehearse going to the function. Close your eyes and see yourself having a good time, meeting people, and enjoying the music all without a cigarette.
- Practice saying "No thank you, I don't smoke" just in case someone offers you a cigarette
- Don't drink alcohol or limit yourself to one or two drinks
- Have a support person with you at the party

Stress management/negative mood

- Separate cigarettes from the situation. Realize that smoking never made a situation any better or helped you deal with it.
- Step back, take a deep breath, and say to yourself, "I can handle this." Then deal with the problem.
- Strategize about how to handle stressful situations with friends, relatives or other support persons before encountering those situations.
- Begin an exercise program, take a formal stress management class or learn to meditate.

Telephone

- Stand instead of sit. If possible, use a portable phone so you can move around.
- Move the location of the phone
- Hold the phone in the hand opposite of the one you usually use
- Limit your time on the phone

Weight gain

- Remember, the average weight gain, as a direct result of quitting, is only five to seven pounds. Any weight gain over and above that is due to behavioral changes on the part of the quitter.

- Prepare by having healthy snacks available prior to your quit. Carrots, celery sticks, grapes, plain popcorn, raisins, dried fruit, etc.
- Drink six to eight glasses of water a day.
- Begin a modest exercise program. If you can do nothing else, take a brisk half hour walk every day.
- Remember, smoking does not turn your body into a fat burning machine. If it did, every smoker would be about 100 lbs!!

Work

- Put a "No Smoking" sign or motivation poster in your work area
- Change your work routine as much as possible
- Take your break at a different time
- If you usually smoke outdoors, stay inside during your break. Read or work on a crossword puzzle
- Listen to music, talk radio, or tapes
- Have a support person at work
- Realize that you don't need an excuse to take a break. You deserve it!

Special situations or conditions

Studies suggest that everyone can quit smoking. Your situation or condition can give you a special reason to quit. Here is how you can benefit from quitting:

- **Pregnant women/new mothers** - Protect your baby's health and your own.
- **Hospitalized patients** - reduce health problems and help healing.
- **Heart attack patients** - reduce your risk of a second heart attack.
- **Lung, head, and neck cancer patients** - reduce your chance of a second cancer.
- **Parents of children and adolescents** - protect your children and adolescents from illnesses caused by second-hand smoke.

Questions to think about

Ask yourself the following questions before you try to stop smoking. You may want to talk about your answers with your health care provider.

1. Why do I want to quit?
2. When I have tried to quit in the past, what helped and what didn't?
3. What will be the most difficult situations for me after I quit? How will you plan to handle them?
4. Who can help me through the tough times? Your family? Friends? Health care provider?
5. What pleasures do I get from smoking? What ways can you still get pleasure if you quit?



Questions to ask your health care provider

1. How can you help me to succeed at quitting?
2. What medication do you think would be best for me and how should I take it?
3. What should I do if I need more help?
4. What is smoking withdrawal like? How can I get information on withdrawal?