



Know the facts

Health



4 step plan to quitting smoking

It will take effort to quit

Half the battle in quitting is knowing that you need to quit. This knowledge will help you to be able to deal with the symptoms of withdrawal that can occur, such as bad moods and the craving of really wanting to smoke. There are many ways smokers quit, including using nicotine replacement products (gum and patches), but there is no easy way. Nearly all smokers have some symptoms of nicotine withdrawal when they try to quit. Give yourself a month to completely get over these feelings. Take quitting one day at a time, even one minute at a time — whatever you need to succeed.

Don't smoke any number or any kind of cigarette

Smoking even a few cigarettes a day can damage your health. If you try to smoke fewer cigarettes, but do not stop completely, soon you will be smoking the same amount again. Smoking low tar, low nicotine cigarettes usually does little good. Because nicotine is so addictive, if you switch to lower nicotine brands you'll likely just puff harder, longer, and more often on each cigarette. The only safe choice is to quit completely.

Step 1: Seriously think about quitting

Feeling ready and motivated to quit is very important.

Seriously think about how you will feel once you quit, the freedom from associated health risks, no longer an addict to nicotine, having more money, no bad breath, smelly fingers or smoky clothes.

We all find excuses and reasons to put off the day when we finally quit. You may be worried about coping with the cravings, or dealing with stress, or putting on weight.

It is also very hard to quit when everyone around you is smoking.

Try to remember why you first started smoking. Do your reasons for smoking seem stupid? Are your reasons for stopping more important than your reasons for starting?



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Step 2: All about planning

The success to stopping isn't about willpower it is about planning.

It is important to choose a specific date and to stick to it. Preferably choose a day that is not going to be too stressful.

Advance plan how to deal with temptation. Everyone will be faced with situations where they will be tempted to have just one cigarette. This isn't always easy, especially if everyone around you is smoking and offering you cigarettes.

It helps to have your reasons for not smoking ready for when you feel the pressure, such as "I just don't like it" or "I want to stay in shape for soccer" (or basketball, tennis or any other sport).

Think about what your temptations are; for instance, after a meal, in a bar, after a cup of tea or coffee.

Make a list of all your temptations and put it where you can see it, on the fridge, in your wallet or purse.

Plan for your cravings. You may wish to speak to your doctor or pharmacist about using nicotine patches or nicotine gum.

Go public. Getting support from the people around you really helps. Plan ahead by telling your family and friends of your intention to quit. You could even buddy up with a friend and quit together.

Step 3: Throw away all your cigarettes

The night before your quit day you need to get rid of any temptation.

Look around the house, the car, go through all your pockets.

Throw away any of your cigarettes. Initially, it is also a good idea to put away any matches, lighters or ashtrays that you have, as these will only remind you of smoking.

Step 4: Well done!

You have reached the final stage for quitting.

This is a dangerous time for ex-smokers because you might think that you can handle "just one cigarette". But that would ruin all your hard work.

It helps if you think of yourself as a NON-SMOKER not an ex-smoker.





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Coping with difficult situations

It is a very good idea to remind yourself of all the situations that may tempt you into wanting a cigarette. Planning for these situations can really help.

If you do have a cigarette, you should stop again immediately, throw away the packet.

Take yourself out of the situation – go for a walk, take a drink of water, phone a friend. Take a deep breath and ask yourself if you really want to be a smoker again.

If you do start again - don't worry – you have not failed. You have improved your chances of success next time.

It takes most people 3 or 4 attempts before they finally quit for good.

If you relapse go back to step 2 and set yourself a new quit date.

Feel proud of yourself everyday

Every morning you should remind yourself that you are doing something amazing.

You are in control, not controlled by nicotine, and are now a NON-SMOKER.

It is a good idea to put the money that you would have spent on smoking in a jar where you can see it. Every day, as you see it fill up, you can plan for something special.

Withdrawal symptoms

- **Cravings** – your brain is missing the nicotine fix, this should get better after a few weeks.
- **Coughing** – your lungs are clearing out the tar. Try having a warm drink to soothe your cough.
- **Hunger, diarrhea or constipation** – your body is just returning to normal, try to eat healthy snacks instead of junk food. Drink plenty of water.
- **Dizziness** – your brain is getting used to having a normal amount of oxygen. So don't worry, this should only last for a few days.
- **Trouble sleeping, bad moods** – these are signs of nicotine withdrawal and shouldn't last more than 2-3 weeks.

Sources:

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