

Quit Tips

1. Tips for preparing to stop

- Decide positively that you want to stop. Try to avoid negative thoughts about how difficult it might be.
- List all the reasons you want to stop. Every night before going to bed, repeat one of the reasons 10 times.
- Develop strong personal reasons in addition to your health and obligations to others. For example, think of all the time you waste taking cigarette breaks, rusing out to buy a pack, hunting for a light, etc.
- Begin to condition yourself physically: Start a modest exercise program; drink more fluids; get plenty of rest; and avoid fatigue.

Know what to expect:

- Have realistic expectations — stopping isn't easy, but it's not impossible either. More than 3 million Americans stop smoking every year.
- Understand that withdrawal symptoms are *temporary* and are healthy signs that the body is repairing itself from its long exposure to nicotine. Within 24 hours of abrupt smoking cessation, withdrawal symptoms may appear as the body begins its healing process.
- Know that most relapses occur in the first week or two after stopping, when withdrawal symptoms are strongest and your body is still dependent on nicotine. Be aware that this will be your hardest time, and use all your personal resources — willpower, family, friends, and any tips that work for you — to get you through this critical period successfully.

Involve someone else:

- Bet a friend you can stop on your target date. Put your cigarette money aside every day, and forfeit it if you smoke. (But if you do, *don't give up*; simply strengthen your resolve and try again.)
- Ask your spouse or a friend to stop with you.
- Tell your family and friends that you're stopping and when. They can be an important source of support both before and after you stop.

2. Tips for just before stopping

- Practice going without cigarettes.
- Don't think of *never* smoking again. Think of stopping in terms of 1 day at a time.
- Stop carrying cigarettes with you at home and at work. Make them difficult to get to.
- Don't empty your ashtrays. This will remind you of how many cigarettes you've smoked each day, and the sight and smell of stale butts will be very unpleasant.
- Collect all your cigarette butts in one large glass container as a visual reminder of the mess smoking represents.

3. Tips for the day you stop

- Throw away all your cigarettes and matches. Hide your lighters and ashtrays.

- Clean your clothes to rid them of the cigarette smell, which can linger a long time.
- Develop a clean, fresh, nonsmoking environment around yourself — at work and at home. Buy yourself flowers — you may be surprised how much you can enjoy their scent now.
- Visit the dentist and have your teeth cleaned to get rid of tobacco stains. Notice how nice they look, and resolve to keep them that way.
- Make a list of things you'd like to buy for yourself or someone else. Estimate the cost in terms of packs of cigarettes and put the money aside to buy these presents.
- Keep very busy on the big day. Go to the movies, exercise, take long walks, or go bike riding.
- Buy yourself a treat or do something special to celebrate.
- Stay away from other smokers if they could weaken your resolve (this need only be a temporary measure).
- Remember that one cigarette could ruin a successful attempt.
- Remember that alcohol will weaken willpower.
- Refuse to allow anything to change your mind.

4. Tips to help you cope with the urge to smoke

- a) First remind yourself that you've *stopped* and you're a *nonsmoker*. Then, look closely at your urge to smoke and ask yourself:
 - Where was I when I got the urge?
 - What was I doing at the time?
 - Who was I with?
 - What was I thinking?
- b) Think about why you've stopped:
 - Repeat to yourself (aloud if you are alone) your three main reasons for stopping.
 - Write down your three main reasons for stopping, then three reasons for smoking.
- c) Anticipate triggers and prepare to avoid them:
 - Keep your hands busy — doodle, knit, type a letter.
 - Avoid people who smoke; spend more time with nonsmoking friends.
 - Find activities that make smoking difficult (gardening, exercising, washing the car, taking a shower).
 - Put something other than a cigarette in your mouth. Keep oral substitutes handy — try carrots, sunflower seeds, apples, celery, raisins, or sugarless gum instead of a cigarette. Cut a drinking straw into cigarette-sized pieces and inhale air. Use a mouthwash.
 - Change your surroundings when an urge hits; get up and move about, or do something else.
 - Avoid places where smoking is permitted. Sit in the nonsmoking section in restaurants, trains, and planes.
 - Look at your watch whenever an urge to smoke hits you. You'll find the urge will only last a few minutes.
 - Wear a rubber band around your wrist. When you really feel like you want a cigarette, snap the rubber band a few times and in your mind say *STOP*. While you do this, picture in your mind a red stop sign. You might try this at home aloud a few times and then do it silently when in public.
 - Be prepared for “first times” as a nonsmoker: your first vacation, first time home alone, first long car ride, first period of boredom. If you know you will be in a *high-risk* situation, plan how you will get through it without smoking.

- d) Change your daily routine in order to break your habits and patterns:
 - After meals, get up from the table; brush your teeth or take a walk.
 - Change the order in which you do things, particularly your morning routine.
 - Don't sit in your favorite chair.
 - Eat your lunch in a different location.

- e) Use positive thoughts:
 - If self-defeating thoughts start to creep in, remind yourself again that you're a nonsmoker, that you don't want to smoke, and that you have good reasons for it.
 - Keep a daydream ready to go. For example, start planning a perfect vacation; work on that plan when thoughts about cigarettes start to give you trouble.
 - Look around at all the people who don't smoke, including children. Remind yourself that they feel normal and healthy without cigarettes.

- f) Use relaxation techniques:
 - Breathe in deeply and slowly, while you count to five; breathe out slowly, counting to five again.
 - Take 10 deep breaths and hold the last one while lighting a match. Exhale slowly and blow out that match. Pretend it's a cigarette, and crush it out in an ashtray.
 - If you can't concentrate, don't worry. You'll be able to when you *need* to, when the adrenaline flows.

5. Tips for coping with relapse

- Stop smoking immediately.
- Get rid of any cigarettes you may have.
- Write down *three reasons* why you *ought* to become a regular smoker again.
- Recognize that you've had a slip. A slip means you've had a *small* setback and smoked a cigarette or two. But your first cigarette or two didn't make you a smoker to start with, and a small setback doesn't make you a smoker again.
- Don't be too hard on yourself. One slip doesn't mean you're a failure or that you can't be a nonsmoker, but it's important to get yourself back on the nonsmoking track *immediately*.
- Recognize that most successful former smokers stop for good only after more than one attempt.
- Identify the trigger: Exactly what was it that prompted you to smoke? Be aware of the trigger and decide *now* how you'll cope with it when it comes up again.
- Sign a contract with yourself to remain a nonsmoker.

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