



Smoke-Free Life

Quitting is hard. Many people try several times before they quit for good, but they do succeed. You can quit; these steps can help!

12 Steps for Success

1 Know why you want to quit.

You know that you should quit smoking – there are lots of good things it would do for your health. But that’s not good enough. Quitting smoking is tough—you have to have a powerful, personal reason for quitting in order to be successful. It may be that you don’t want your kids around second hand smoke, or that you saw a friend or family member suffer with lung disease. Whatever your reason for quitting, choose something that is strong enough to help you overcome the urge to light up.

2 Don’t go cold turkey.

Quitting smoking is tough. A huge majority (95%) of people who attempt to quit “cold turkey” end up smoking again in a few days or weeks. Nicotine is highly addictive; your brain craves it. When your body first goes without nicotine, you may develop a headache, feel irritable, depressed, nervous and extremely hungry.

3 Try nicotine-replacement therapy.

It can help prevent the uncomfortable feelings associated with withdrawal. Nicotine replacement patches, gum or lozenges—along with support and a quit smoking plan—can help double your chances of quitting successfully. Over time, gradually decrease the dose of nicotine until you are ready to stop using it all together. You should not smoke when using nicotine replacement.

4 Ask about medication help.

Ask your nurse or doctor about prescription medicines that may help you quit smoking. These medicines do not contain nicotine but work by changing the chemicals in your brain to stop the craving for cigarettes. These medicines may make smoking less satisfying. Other medications may be prescribed to help with the nicotine withdrawal symptoms, like irritability or depression.

5 Get support, go public.

Tell your family, friends or co-workers that you plan to quit smoking. Their support and encouragement could help you be successful. Consider joining a support group or looking for a counselor who will help you make a quit smoking plan and stick with it. Make sure you follow up with your support person or group often, especially when you first quit. They can help you problem solve difficult situations. Combining support groups with medications and/or nicotine replacement therapy boosts your chances of success.



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12 Steps for Success (Continued)

6 Manage your stress.

Most smokers say they smoke to relax or calm down. Once you quit, you'll need to have other ways to help you manage stress. This could be a deep breathing routine, going for a walk, getting a massage, or taking a yoga class. Try to avoid stressful situations the first few weeks after quitting while making time to do enjoyable, relaxing activities.

7 Avoid alcohol and other "triggers."

For many smokers, having a drink goes along with having a cigarette. This may be also true for your morning coffee. You may be used to having a cigarette after a meal. It may be best if you can avoid these situations soon after quitting or find ways to change your routine. Try tea instead of coffee, brush your teeth after a meal, avoid alcohol—meet your friends for a walk instead of for a drink.

8 Clean up.

Once you've made the commitment to quit smoking, get rid of all of the reminders of smoking. Toss out the ashtrays, lighters or anything else that reminds you of smoking. Clean your house and your car—including carpets, upholstery and drapes. Don't forget to wash your clothes. You don't want to see or smell anything that will remind you of smoking.

9 Get active.

Exercise can help decrease nicotine cravings and withdrawal symptoms. When you crave a cigarette, try going for a bike ride or taking the dog for a walk. The extra calories burned will also help offset any weight gain that may result from quitting smoking.

10 Eat your fruits and vegetables.

Many smokers worry about gaining weight when they quit smoking. Eating fruits and vegetables that are low in calories and high in nutrients is a great way to satisfy your cravings without packing on the pounds.

11 Pick a reward.

Health benefits aside, don't forget to reward yourself for your quit smoking success. Think about all of the money you've saved by not buying cigarettes; use that to treat yourself to something fun!

12 Keep trying. Try again.

It is common for smokers to make several tries at quitting before they are able to give up cigarettes for good. Right now, there are more Americans living who are ex-smokers than are current smokers—proof that over half of smokers have quit. You can too! If you relapse, try to understand the emotions and circumstances that lead you to pick up that cigarette. See if you can re-commit to quitting and once you've made the decision to try again, set a quit date within the next few weeks or month.



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Resources for Smokers

- 1-800-QUIT NOW (784-8669): This is the national access number to state-based quitline services.
- www.ahrq.gov/path/tobacco.htm
- www.smokefree.gov

There has never been a better time to Quit!

Why Quit?

- Smoking is dangerous. More than 435,000 Americans die each year from smoking.
- Smoking causes illness such as cancer, heart disease, stroke, and lung disease.
- If you are pregnant, your baby will be healthier if you quit smoking.
- The people around you, especially children, will be healthier if you quit. Breathing in other people's smoke can cause asthma and other health problems.
- You will have more money when you quit. If you smoke one pack per day, quitting smoking could save you up to more than \$160 per month.



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Smoking Cessation Worksheet

Here's How! Stop Smoking Checklist:

- Set a quit date.** No smoking after: _____
- Get support.** Names of people who will support me: _____

- Talk to my nurse or doctor about medicines** to help me quit.
 My clinic appointment: _____
- Clean my house and car.** Get rid of all cigarettes, ashtrays and lighters.
- Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669)** to be connected to the quitline in my State for additional support. It's free!
- Things I will do to help me stay smoke free: _____
Examples: Avoid bars where people can smoke. Keep a positive attitude.

Don't Forget: Health Benefits of Living Smoke Free

- Within 20 minutes of your last cigarette: your heart rate and blood pressure become lower—a good thing.
- Within 24 hours of your last cigarette: the carbon monoxide levels in your blood become normal.
- Within 2 weeks to 3 months after quitting:
 - Your risk of having a heart attack begins to drop.
 - Your lung function begins to improve.
- Long term benefits of quitting smoking: a lower risk of heart disease, stroke, and lung cancer!
 You will feel better, have more energy, and breathe easier!