

Smoking: Preparing to Quit

Making a Decision to Quit

Cigarettes have served important functions for you. By making a decision to quit, you will need to be ready to give up your reasons for smoking and find non-smoking ways of achieving the same goals (just think about how a nonsmoker achieves these goals). In making your commitment to quit smoking, it is also important to recognize and acknowledge the reasons you want to quit. What are these? Health, money and freedom may be some of the reasons you want to quit. Reminding yourself of the benefits of quitting is helpful for maintaining your desire to quit and remain abstinent. It is often useful to make a list of your personal reasons for quitting.

Strategies to Help You Quit

The better you prepare yourself for a new challenge, the more likely you are to succeed. Preparing to be a nonsmoker involves changing your behavior and surroundings to begin acting like a nonsmoker.

Coping Strategies for Triggers

Awareness of one's behavior is the first step in controlling or changing that behavior. By keeping a record of triggers and high risk situations, you can identify possible hard situations before they happen. Once you know your triggers, you will then be more able to prepare and deal with them. A "trigger" can be thought of as a cue or signal to engage in a certain behavior. Triggers are commonly divided into two groups:

External Triggers: taste, smell, visual stimuli, handling, after meals, with coffee or alcohol, when meeting people, working, talking on the phone, celebration, having a well-earned break

Internal Triggers: mood (anxiety, anger, happiness, stress), certain thoughts

One way to monitor your smoking patterns is to keep track of your cigarettes and triggers on a Tracking Sheet.

The table below lists some common triggers for smoking, possible reasons why it is a trigger, and coping strategies or things you might try to stop the craving and urge to smoke when you encounter that trigger.

Trigger	Possible Reason Why	Alternative Coping Strategies
Morning/waking up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Withdrawal symptoms ▪ Habit / Something to start the day 	Brush your teeth first thing when you get up, drink some orange juice, exercise.
After meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relaxation ▪ Increase metabolism 	Keep hands busy, wash dishes, brush your teeth, take a walk
Tension/stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cope with stress ▪ Cope with bad moods ▪ Take a break 	Exercise, practice deep breathing, take a warm bath.
While driving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boredom ▪ Cope with stress/traffic ▪ Habit 	Clean out ashtray, use “no smoking” reminders, chew gum, suck on peppermints, remove lighter
At bedtime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Habit ▪ Relaxation 	Change your nighttime routine, drink warm milk to relax, take a warm bath.
When my hands feel empty / Idle Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boredom ▪ Habit ▪ Restlessness 	Play with something in hands, chew on toothpick, work puzzles, go for a walk, doodle, read, call a friend
With coffee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Habit ▪ Relaxation ▪ Taste/smell 	Avoid or switch to decaf or tea, change environments (e.g., drink coffee outside or in a non-smoking place)
Phone calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Restlessness ▪ Habit 	Doodle, play with something in your hands
Writing/studying/reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concentration ▪ Boredom ▪ Habit 	Take breaks, drink orange juice, suck on peppermints.
Watching T.V.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Restlessness ▪ Habit ▪ Boredom 	Chew on a straw, eat Popcorn or hard candy, drink juice, sit in a different chair, listen to music or the radio instead.
Being around other smokers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Celebration ▪ Socializing/Other smokers ▪ Relaxation 	Ask them not to smoke around you, leave and go somewhere else (temporarily or permanently), be assertive about how you are feeling

Preparing Your Surroundings to Help You Quit

Cigarette smoking is part of your life and has probably become part of your surroundings. To help you quit, remove things from your home, office or car that remind you of smoking.

- Get rid of visual reminders to smoke such as ashtrays, lighters and matches in your home, office and car.
- Find and destroy “stray” cigarettes. Clean out coat pockets, kitchen drawers and your glove compartment.
- Set up visual reminders to not smoke, such as short notes posted around your home, car and/or work (“Smoking is not an option”).

Clean and deodorize where you live:

- Deodorize and clean your carpets.
- Wash your curtains.
- Wash your clothes.
- Deodorize your furniture (for example, with Febreze).
- Air out your rooms by opening your windows.
- Light scented candles.
- Clean out your car.

Prepare Your Body to Help You Quit

You may or may not have withdrawal symptoms. To handle the withdrawal symptoms you may have, it helps to get yourself physically prepared.

- Be sure to get a lot of rest. Your body has been used to getting a lot of nicotine, and it needs time to readjust to being without the drug.
- Eat right. Limit your fat intake and increase the amount of fruit and vegetables you eat each day.
- Remember to think of this as a time for recovery.

Prepare your Friends and Family to Help You Quit

Quitting smoking can be much easier if you have support from your friends and family.

- Remind your family and friends of your quit date.
- If possible, avoid people who are critical of your efforts to quit smoking.
- Remind your co-workers of your quit date and ask them to be patient if you become more irritable.

For more information on social support, ask your health care provider for a copy of “Social Support When Quitting Smoking.” For more information on strategies to help you cope, ask for a copy of “Strategies for Coping With Not Smoking.”