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## QUITTING SMOKING

There's no one way to quit smoking that works for everyone. To quit, you must be ready both emotionally and mentally. You must also want to quit smoking for yourself, and not to please your friends or family. It helps to plan ahead. This guide will help you get started.

### PREPARING TO QUIT

- 1) **Explore what drives your smoking** - Write down when you smoke, why you smoke, and what you are doing when you smoke. This should give some insight into what triggers you to smoke.
- 2) **Understand the negative impact of smoking**
  - Nicotine changes the chemistry of the animal part of the brain and trains it to light up a cigarette whenever you find yourself in a situation where you would normally smoke – irrespective of whether you enjoy smoking or not i.e. a bad habit.
  - Nicotine artificially raises the levels of dopamine (feel good hormone) in your body and thus stops its natural production. So on a chemical level nicotine results in a temporary good feeling and no nicotine results in depression and anxiety.
  - Smoking puts your health at risk.
  - Smoking puts your friend's and family's health at risk.
  - It is never too late to stop!
- 3) **Pick a date to quit smoking and then stick to it.** Research shows that stopping abruptly ("cold turkey") makes a big difference as it breaks the link between smoking and the situation in which you find yourself smoking.
- 4) **Write down your reasons for quitting.** Read over the list every day before and after you quit.
- 5) **Set yourself goals.** This can be a smoking or non-smoking related goals. Make the goals small and realistic i.e. SMART goals.
- 6) Be realistic and honest with yourself about your expectations of the quitting process and the amount of time and effort required.
- 7) Write up numbers 3-5 above on a sheet of paper and sign it so that you make a "contract" with yourself.
- 8) Rid your home/office/care/self of the smell of smoke and smoking paraphernalia. This will limit temptation.

- 9) **Establish a support network** - If friends or family members want to give up too, suggest to them that you give up together. Also, there is your local NHS stop smoking services and the NHS Smoking Helpline, available on 0300 123 1014 (open Monday to Friday 9am-8pm, Saturday to Sunday 11am-4pm). Also speak to your GP for their advice and support. Research has shown that hearing the stories of others who have successfully quite smoking is really helpful.
- 10) Think about past experiences in your life where you have overcome a challenge and this to help motivation and positive thinking.
- 11) Practice mindfulness to strengthen you ability to control your thoughts and develop delayed gratification. There are many mobile apps that can help in this regard.
- 12) **Know that it will take commitment and effort to quit smoking.**
  - Nearly all smokers have some feelings of nicotine withdrawal when they try to quit. Nicotine is addictive. Knowing this will help you deal with withdrawal symptoms that can occur, such as bad moods and really wanting to smoke (cravings).

## **DEALING WITH SMOKING TRIGGERS**

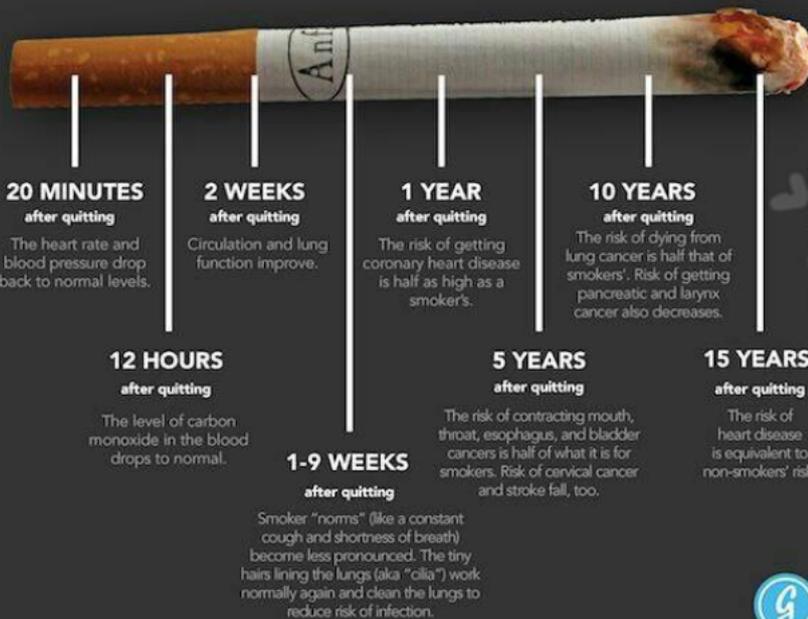
- 1) **Avoid or limit contact with people who make you want to smoke**
  - Make non-smoking friends.
  - Ask people not to smoke in your presence.
- 2) **Avoid or limit places that make you want to smoke**
  - Avoid the store where you usually buy cigarettes.
  - Hang out in or go to places that don't allow smoking, such as the movies, museums, shops, or libraries.
- 3) **Avoid or limit situations that make you want to smoke**
  - If nervous/anxious/fidgety then keep your hands busy - doodle, play with a pencil or straw, or work on a computer. If you like holding a cigarette, use an inhalator. Try putting your drink in the hand that usually holds a cigarette, or drink from a straw to keep your mouth busy.
  - Change activities that were connected to smoking. Take a walk or read a book instead of taking a cigarette break.
- 4) **Avoid or limit things that make you want to smoke**
  - Change your drink: the combination of smoking and drinking heavily raises your risk of mouth cancer by 38 times. Fizzy drinks, alcohol, cola, tea and coffee all make cigarettes taste better. So when you're out, drink more water and juice. Some people find that simply changing their drink (for example, switching from wine to a vodka and tomato juice), affects their need to reach for a cigarette.

- Change your diet - Is your after-dinner cigarette your favourite? A study revealed that some foods, including meat, make cigarettes more satisfying. Others, including cheese, fruit and vegetables, make cigarettes taste terrible. So swap your usual steak or burger for a veggie pizza instead.

## DEALING WITH WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS

- When you quit smoking, you may crave cigarettes, be irritable, feel very hungry, cough often, get headaches, or have difficulty concentrating. These symptoms of withdrawal occur because your body is used to nicotine, the addictive ingredient in cigarettes.
- When withdrawal symptoms occur within the first two weeks after quitting, stay in control. Think about your reasons for quitting. Remind yourself that these are signs that your body is healing and getting used to being without cigarettes.
- Don't focus on what you are missing. Think about the healthier way of life you are gaining.
- Track your goals. Reflecting on what you have achieved (however small) is really important in building your self confidence that you can resist temptation. There are many [mobile apps](#) that can help in this regard.
- The withdrawal symptoms are only temporary. They are strongest when you first quit but will go away within 10 to 14 days. Remember that withdrawal symptoms are easier to treat than the major diseases that smoking can cause.
- You may still have the desire to smoke, since there are many strong associations with smoking. You may associate smoking with specific situations, with a variety of emotions, or with certain people in your life. The best way to overcome these associations is to experience them without smoking.
- A craving can last five minutes. Before you give up, make a list of five-minute strategies
- **Breathing** – research has shown that simple deep breathing can help lessen your craving. When you get the urge to smoke, take a deep breath. Hold it for 10 seconds and release it slowly. Repeat this several times until the urge to smoke is gone.
- **Exercise** – research has shown that exercise cuts cravings and may help your brain to produce anti-craving chemicals.
- Use your support network
- Drink water
- Take up a hobby
- Chew a glucose tablet or a low calorie sweet.
- Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) can make you twice as likely to succeed. As well as patches, there are tiny tablets, lozenges, gum and a nasal spray.
- Try an electronic cigarette
- **Remember this good news!** More than half of all adult smokers have quit, and you can, too. Millions of people have learned to face life without a cigarette. Quitting smoking is the single most important step you can take to protect your health and the health of your family.

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A SMOKER QUILTS A 15 YEAR TIMELINE



Source: [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)



### RESOURCES

- 1) <http://www.nhs.uk/smokefree>
- 2) [http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Smoking-\(quitting\)/Pages/Treatment.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Smoking-(quitting)/Pages/Treatment.aspx)