

Quitting Smoking Preparing to Succeed

HEALTH EDUCATION

Quitting smoking is hard, but it is possible! The benefits to you and your family are worth it. Although quitting can be tough, there are ways to make it less difficult and to increase your chance of success.

What Are Your Thoughts about Smoking?

It is important to know your feelings about quitting smoking before you begin the process. Check the box that comes closest to your feelings.

- I don't want to quit.**
 - Smoking relaxes me.
 - I don't really believe it will hurt me.
 - My grandfather smoked all his life and lived to be ninety.
 - I don't want to gain weight.

- I have been thinking about quitting.**
 - I know I should quit.
 - I have tried before.
 - I am afraid of failing.
 - I'll do it when I am ready.

- I am going to quit.**
 - I want to quit.
 - I know it is best for my health.

- I am ready to quit now.**
 - It is time.
 - I am ready to stop smoking.
 - It is affecting my health.
 - It is time to take action.

- I have quit and I am working at staying smoke-free.**
 - I haven't smoked but sometimes I still want a cigarette.

Why do you smoke?

List the reasons why you smoke.

Why do you want to quit?

Write down your own reasons for quitting. What is important to you?

Motivation and Commitment

Motivation

How much do you want to quit? How badly do you want to be a nonsmoker? Rate your current level of motivation.

1 2 3 4 5

I really don't want to quit.

I want to quit very badly.

Commitment

How dedicated are you to quitting? Are you willing to do whatever it takes to be a nonsmoker? Rate your current level of commitment.

1 2 3 4 5

I am not willing to make any extra effort.

I am very willing to do whatever it takes to quit.

Are you ready to quit?

If you did not score a 4 or 5 on motivation:

Review your reasons for quitting. If your reasons are clear and being smoke-free is what you want, your motivation should be high.

If you did not score a 4 or 5 on commitment:

Try letting other people know you want to quit. Write a commitment letter and begin thinking about a quit date.

Set a Quit Date

Quitting is a major life challenge. While some former smokers may share the fact that they decided one day to put down the pack and have not wanted to smoke since, this is not the case for most people.

Most people need to set a quit date and plan ahead:

- Try to choose a time that is not highly stressful.
- You may want to start over a weekend or during a vacation.
- You may prefer to quit during a normal week when things are more routine.
- You may also want to link quitting to an important date such as a birthday or anniversary.

When you decide to set your quit date:

- Set it within 2 weeks.
- Do not set it too far away. You may lose your resolve to quit.
- During the days leading up to your quit date, you will be preparing and making decisions about your approach.

Cut Down

Smokers who are getting ready to quit often smoke more, really wanting to enjoy their last cigarettes.

A better choice is to cut down on the number of cigarettes you smoke. This allows you to find out which cigarettes are easy for you to cut out. You will also find out when it may be harder for you not to smoke.

Get Ready

Use the time between now and your quit date to find out as much as you can about your smoking habits and routines. By knowing when and where you are most likely to smoke, you can better prepare for how you will feel when you quit.

You will also learn what to avoid. This will help you to stay smoke-free once you have quit.

It will also help to:

- Talk with your doctor about medications to help quit.
- Tell your family, friends and coworkers about your plans.
- Begin to clear your home, car and work of all cigarettes and tobacco products.

Learn About Your Smoking Habits – Keep a Journal

Often you smoke without thinking about it. It is such a part of your daily routine that you barely realize that you are smoking. Keep a journal for a couple of days.

Record:

- When you smoke
- What you are doing
- How you are feeling when you smoke
- Where you are when you smoke

- If there are others with you when you smoke.
- Your desire for the cigarette:
1 = could do without
2 = just want a cigarette
3 = need a cigarette

Review Your Journal

List the top three times in which you most wanted to smoke.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

List the three cigarettes of the day that will be the easiest to give up.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

List the top three cigarettes that may be the hardest to give up.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Make a Plan

To succeed at quitting smoking, you need to have a plan and be prepared to deal with rocky times. Think back to the three times when you most wanted to smoke. Decide now how to avoid these times to help ensure your success later.

I can avoid

by

I can avoid

by

I can avoid

by

Find Personal Support

You may need some special people to help you. Think about who will help you through the rough times. List 3 people who will support you.

Note:

Sometimes loved ones and people in your daily life will attempt to help you in ways that you find less than helpful. You may need to tell others how they can best help you. Be specific and let them know you appreciate their support.

Know Your Resources

There are many helpful resources online and through telephone contact. Support groups and community resources are also helpful.

Say Goodbye

Quitting smoking is a major life event.

- Do your final sweep of all cigarettes, ashtrays, and lighters and discard. You may want to do this in a special way, such as putting them in a box and burying them.
- Sign a contract to put your resolve to lead a smoke-free life in writing. You may choose to sign this once or make copies and sign it each day.

➤ It takes work and commitment to succeed at quitting smoking. You are on your way to many healthier days ahead.