

10 Tips to Help You Quit Smoking

Despite all the health risks associated with smoking cigarettes, it's not easy to quit smoking. According to the [U.S. Food & Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#)¹, about 70 percent of current smokers say they want to quit, 55 percent actually tried to quit, but only 7 percent were able to drop the habit. If you fall into the category of people trying to quit but have failed in your efforts, you're clearly not alone. However, it's not impossible! Here are some tips to help you quit smoking for good.

1. Identify the Triggers That Make You Crave a Cigarette

Whether you notice it or not, there are things that you do or experience that make you crave a cigarette. Some common triggers for smokers include feeling tired, pairing a cigarette with drinking alcohol, lighting up during work breaks or smoking while driving. The first thing you should do on your path to quitting is to identify these triggers and become aware of them. Once you understand what makes you want to reach for that cigarette, the more you can focus your efforts on avoiding them or work on overcoming these triggers.

2. Let People Around You Know Your Goal

Simply expressing your intention to quit smoking can be a powerful step in the quitting process. When the people around you know that you want to quit smoking, they can offer motivation and support to keep you on track. A coworker might ask you about your progress, or a friend will stop offering you cigarettes when you spend time together, for example. It also holds you accountable to others if you experience a particularly strong craving.

3. Do Your Research on Quitting Methods

Quitting "cold turkey" might work for some people, but it certainly isn't the most effective method for many smokers who are addicted to nicotine. Addiction affects both the body and the mind and can trigger intense cravings that willpower alone cannot overcome. Fortunately, there are nicotine replacement options that are designed to help smokers gradually break their addiction to nicotine and make quitting a little easier. It's important to research which quitting method might work best for you before giving up because you failed on your own.

4. Make a Plan

Making a plan when quitting smoking is always a good idea. It sets you up for success by giving you a goal to focus on and a timeline to get there. Pick a date, make a promise and stick to it! All goals, no matter how challenging, have a starting point. If you commit to your plan and follow through with it, you'll have kicked the habit before you know it.

5. Recognize Withdrawal Symptoms

Many smokers experience common symptoms when trying to quit. Identifying and recognizing these withdrawal symptoms can help you stay in control when you're having a tough time. For example, you may find yourself feeling anxious or irritated by everything around you for no reason. Knowing that your body is experiencing nicotine withdrawal and this is a symptom will help you remember that it will pass if you can just hang on.

[The National Cancer Institute \(NCI\)](#)² lists other common nicotine withdrawal symptoms on its Smokefree online resource page as:

- Intense cravings
- Weight gain
- Sleep problems
- Mood changes
- Concentration issues
- Flu-like symptoms
- Constipation
- Headaches
- Coughing

6. Find Effective Distractions

Distractions are essential to keep you on track when you have a tobacco craving. Many smokers who are in the process of quitting will turn to snacks, hard candy, sugarless gum or other things they can chew on to help fight the urge to smoke. Crunchy snacks seem to help satisfy a sudden craving, so keep things like carrots, celery or nuts handy when you're trying to quit. You can also try something like a stress ball or fidget spinner to keep your hands occupied during times you would typically be lighting up a cigarette.

7. Exercise Your Cravings Away

Physical activity is a great way to stay healthy in general, but it could also help you in your efforts to kick your smoking habit for good. According to [The National Cancer Institute \(NCI\)](#)³, even short bursts of physical activity will significantly reduce the urge to smoke. Exercise also helps boost your mood, gives you more energy and may help you cope with the stress of nicotine withdrawal. If nothing else, it will keep you distracted for a while, so you don't have the opportunity to think about smoking.

8. Practice Relaxation Techniques

Many smokers admit they turn to cigarettes as a way to deal with stressful situations. When you remove the comfort of smoking and add nicotine withdrawal symptoms to the mix, stress can feel overwhelming when trying to quit. This is why it's a good idea to proactively approach your

plan to quit smoking with helpful relaxation techniques. Something as simple as deep breathing can help center your thoughts and efforts. You can also look into visualization exercises, yoga, massage therapy or listening to relaxing music.

9. Find the Right Level of Support

Every person is unique, and an individual's experience when trying to quit smoking may be very different from another's. Finding the level of support you need to be successful is a crucial step in the quitting process. Getting encouragement from family and friends is a type of support most smokers need.

However, you can also find support groups online or through social media that will add another layer of motivation by sharing challenges with other people going through the same thing. You may even find it necessary to work with a therapist or other healthcare professional to keep you from falling into old patterns.

10. Remind Yourself of the Risks of Smoking

Smoking will negatively affect your health in so many ways. Numerous studies have shown the connection between smoking and breathing issues, lung disease and lung cancer. The nicotine in cigarettes will also strain your cardiovascular system and can eventually lead to heart disease, heart attack or stroke.

It's easy to think these things will never happen to you, but every drag you take is one step closer to major health issues. The more you smoke and the longer you smoke, the more likely you are to experience these problems.

Take the Time to Understand Your Health

When you decide to quit smoking, it's a big step towards reclaiming your health. It's also the ideal opportunity to find out how healthy you are and what areas you may need to work on to achieve your wellness goals. [CLIENT] offers preventative CT scans that are quick, easy and affordable to help you assess your level of health. To learn more about our services, contact our team today!

Sources:

¹U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA). (01 May 2020). *Quitting Smoking: Closer with Every Attempt*. Retrieved 30 April 2021 from

<https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/health-information/quitting-smoking-closer-every-attempt>

²The National Cancer Institute (NCI). Smokefree.org. *Managing Withdrawal*. Retrieved 30 April 2021 from <https://smokefree.gov/challenges-when-quitting/withdrawal/managing-withdrawal>

³The National Cancer Institute (NCI). Smokefree.org. *Fight Cravings with Exercise*. Retrieved 30 April 2021 from <https://smokefree.gov/challenges-when-quitting/cravings-triggers/fight-cravings-exercise>