

You probably can add more to the list. As you go through the first few days without smoking, write down any rationalizations as they come up and recognize them for what they are: lies that can trick you into going back to smoking. Look out for them, because they always show up when you're trying to quit. After you write down the idea, let it go from your mind and choose to think about something else. Be ready with a distraction, a plan of action, and other ways to re-direct your thoughts to something else. Use the ideas below to help you stay committed to quitting.



Avoid temptation

Stay away from people and places where you are tempted to smoke. Ask God to help you flee to Him when you are pressured with temptation. He is always a safe retreat.

Change your habits

Switch to juices or water instead of alcohol or coffee. Choose foods that don't make you want to smoke, such as fresh fruits, vegetables, or whole grains, nuts and seeds. Take a different route to work. Take a brisk walk instead of a coffee break.

Choose other things for your mouth: Use substitutes you can put in your mouth such as a coffee stirrer or a straw, or drink water.

Get active with your hands: Do something to reduce your stress. Exercise or do hobbies that keep your hands busy, such as needlework or woodworking, which can help distract you from the urge to smoke. Take a hot bath, exercise, or read a book.

Breathe deeply: When you were smoking, you breathed deeply as you inhaled the smoke. When the urge strikes now, breathe deeply and picture your lungs filling with fresh, clean air. Remind

yourself of your reasons for quitting and the benefits you'll gain as an ex-smoker.

Delay: If you feel that you are about to light up, hold off. Urges only last a few minutes, so if you hold off for a few minutes, the urge goes away. When you first stop smoking, the urge will come back again quite quickly, but as you continue to resist, the urges will be less powerful and come less often.

Staying quit

You can use the same methods to stay quit as you did to help you through withdrawal. Think ahead to those times when you may be tempted to smoke, and plan on how you will use other ways to cope with these situations.

More dangerous, perhaps, are the unexpected strong desires to smoke that can sometimes happen months, or even years after you've quit. Rationalizations can show up then, too. To get through these without relapse, go back over the steps listed already.

Recovering from slips

What if you do smoke? The difference between a slip and a relapse is within your control. A slip is a one-time mistake that is quickly corrected. A relapse is going back to smoking. You can use the slip as an excuse to go back to smoking, or you can look at what went wrong and renew your commitment to staying away from smoking for good. Pray, ask for forgiveness, and trust in God to again help you stay quit! He loves to answer that prayer.

Additional Information

For more help in quitting and staying quit, talk to your doctor or visit one of the following web sites for more information:

www.americanheart.org / www.cancer.org

www.cdc.gov/tobacco / www.cancer.gov



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How to Quit

for Good

How to quit

Smokers often say, “Don’t tell me why to quit, tell me how.” There is no one right way to quit, but there are some key elements in quitting with success. These 5 factors are key:

1. Making the decision to quit
2. Setting a quit date and choosing a quit plan
3. Getting help
4. Dealing with withdrawal
5. Staying quit (maintenance)

Making the decision to quit

The decision to quit smoking is one that only you can make. Others may want you to quit, but the real commitment must come from you. Think about why you want to quit.

- Are you worried that you could get a smoking-related disease?
- Do you really believe that the benefits of quitting outweigh the benefits of continuing to smoke?
- Do you want to honor God by keeping the body He made for you healthy?
- Are you ready to make a serious try at quitting?
- If you are thinking about quitting, setting a date and deciding on a plan will help move you to the next step.

Setting a quit date and making a plan

What is important about picking a Quit Day?

Once you’ve decided to quit, you’re ready to pick a quit date. This is a very important step. Pick a day within the next month as your Quit Day. Picking a date too far away can allow you time to rationalize and change your mind. But you do want to give yourself enough time to prepare and come up with a plan. You might choose a date with a special meaning like a birthday or anniversary, or you may want to just pick a random date. Circle the date on your calendar. Make a strong, personal commitment to quit on that day.

Prepare for your Quit Day

There is no one right way to quit. Most smokers prefer to quit cold turkey -- they stop completely, all at once. They smoke until their Quit Day and then quit. Another way involves cutting down on the number of cigarettes you smoke a little bit each day. With this method, you slowly reduce the



amount of nicotine in your body. While it makes sense to cut down in order to reduce withdrawal symptoms, in practice this can be hard to do.

Quitting smoking is a lot like losing weight: it takes a strong commitment over a long time. Smokers may wish there was a magic bullet -- a pill or method that would make quitting painless and easy. But there is nothing like that. Here are some steps to help you prepare for your Quit Day:

- Pick the date and mark it on your calendar.
- Tell friends and family about your Quit Day.
- Get rid of all the cigarettes and ashtrays in your home, car, and place of work.
- Stock up on oral substitutes -- coffee stirrers, straws, and/or toothpicks.
- Decide on a plan. Will you attend a stop-smoking class? If so, sign up now.
- Practice saying, “No thank you, I don’t smoke.”
- Set up a support system. This could be a group program or a friend or family member who has successfully quit and is willing to help you. Ask family and friends who still smoke not to smoke around you or leave cigarettes out where you can see them.

Think back to your past attempts to quit. Try to figure out what worked and what did not work for you. Successful quitting is a matter of planning and commitment, not luck. Decide now on your own plan. Some options include joining a stop-smoking class, using self-help materials such as books and pamphlets, or some combination of methods. For the best chance at success, your plan should include 2 or more options.

Your Quit Day

On your Quit Day:

- Do not smoke. This means none at all— not even one puff!
- Keep active. Try walking, exercising, or doing other activities or hobbies.
- Drink lots of water and juices.
- Attend a stop-smoking class or follow your self-help plan.
- Avoid situations where the urge to smoke is strong.
- Avoid people who are smoking.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine and other drugs.
- Pray earnestly and read your Bible.
- Think about how you can change your

routine. Use a different route to go to work, drink lots of water. Eat breakfast in a different place or eat healthy plant-based foods.

Getting help

Everyone quitting needs help. Help can come in many different forms and faces, but regardless of where you turn—get help! Most people find that relying upon God to help them overcome their addiction gives them much more success than trying to do it on their own. To trust that God is able to help you where you have always fallen in the past is encouraging and gives you strength to keep tobacco free, even when the urges come. (See Jeremiah 31:3, Psalm 103:8-13, 1 Corinthians 15:57, John 8:36, John 3:16,17, 1 John 1:9, Philippians 4:13, Jude 24) It also helps to have accountability with others who do not smoke, whether they be family, friends, or others you know who have successfully quit smoking. Enlist their support and help during your quit attempt.

Dealing with withdrawal

Withdrawal from nicotine has 2 parts — the physical and the mental. The physical symptoms are annoying but not life-threatening. Most smokers find that the bigger challenge is the mental part of quitting.

If you have been smoking for any length of time, smoking has become linked with nearly everything you do — waking up in the morning, eating, reading, watching TV, and drinking coffee, for example. It will take time to “un-link” smoking from these.

Rationalizations are sneaky

One way to overcome these urges or cravings is to notice and identify rationalizations as they come up. A rationalization is a mistaken thought that seems to make sense to you at the time, but the thought is not based on reality. If you choose to believe in such a thought, it can serve as a way to justify smoking. If you have tried to quit before, you will probably recognize many of these common rationalizations:

- “I’ll just have one to get through this rough spot.”
- “Today is not a good day. I’ll quit tomorrow.”
- “It’s my only vice.”
- “How bad is smoking, really?”
- Uncle Harry smoked all his life and he lived to be over 90.”
- “Air pollution is probably just as bad.”
- “You’ve got to die of something.”
- “Life is no fun without smoking.”