

Quit Smoking During Pregnancy with Less Stress



Stress is a common way to react to life events. Your body may become tense, your mood may shift, or you may feel worried. Stress is one of the biggest reasons people smoke, vape, or use hookahs or waterpipes. But you can let go of stress without lighting up. Do something else instead. Relax. Think about something nice. Exercise or lighten your outlook. The urge to smoke often passes in a short time.

Learn to relax

This process helps get the kinks out of your body. Just tighten and release your muscles. With practice, you can relax any time you feel tense. Repeat these steps with different muscles from head to toe.

1. Get ready

Set aside 15 to 20 minutes in a quiet place. Sit or lie down so you feel at ease. Loosen any tight clothing. Take off your shoes and glasses.

2. Focus your mind

You can choose any part of your body. Try your right hand to start. Close your eyes, and see your hand in your mind.

3. Tighten your muscles

Make a fist with your right hand. Really clench your fist for 10 to 15 seconds. Try squeezing until your hand shakes a little.

4. Let go and relax

Release the fist. Let go of the muscles and feel the tension melt away. Your muscles should feel heavy and warm.

Pull up a picture

We all need to get away once in a while. Thinking of a nice place helps you escape. Whether you're waiting for the laundry to finish or just taking a break, the steps below can work:

- Sit or lie down so you feel at ease. Close your eyes, and take a few deep breaths.
- Bring a picture, word, or thought to mind. Hold it there. If you choose a place, try to hear, feel, and smell it.
- Other thoughts may enter your mind. Let them pass by like clouds moving gently overhead.
- When you're done, breathe deeply, and slowly open your eyes.

Exercise

Add a few active minutes to your day. Using your lungs more may make you want to smoke less. And even mild exercise clears the mind, burns calories, and tones muscle. Also, the more fit you are during pregnancy, the easier your recovery is likely to be after the birth. Talk to your healthcare provider before trying these tips:

- Park away from the building and walk.
- Stroll around the block.
- Swim.
- Use the stairs.
- Take an exercise or stretching class designed for pregnant women. Or try a beginner-level yoga class.

Lighten your outlook

Certain feelings can set off a strong urge to smoke. Try these tips to help you lighten your view of life:

- If you're bored, get active. What needs to be done before the baby is born? Pick a name. Find a crib.
- If you're tired, take a nap. Put your feet up and rest.
- If you're angry, count to 50. Then deal with the cause of your anger.
- If you're frustrated, take a 10-minute time-out. Write down the problem or talk it over with your partner or a friend.
- If you're worried or afraid, sing out loud.

To learn more

Here are some resources to help you quit smoking:

- smokefree.gov/talk-to-an-expert
- women.smokefree.gov
- National Cancer Institute Smoking Quitline: 877-44U-QUIT (877-448-7848)

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