

# Stop smoking support programs

## Alternative Names

Smokeless tobacco - stop smoking programs; Stop smoking techniques; Smoking cessation programs; Smoking cessation techniques

## Information

Like any addiction, quitting tobacco is difficult, especially if you are acting alone. Most smokers find it hard to break all the habits or ties they've built into their lives around smoking.

By using smoking cessation programs, smokers may have a much better chance of success. Such programs are offered by hospitals, health departments, community centers, work sites, and national organizations.

The best quit-smoking programs combine multiple strategies.

All smoking cessation programs need to address and provide ongoing support for the many fears and difficulties you can encounter when quitting tobacco products.

Be wary of programs that:

- Are short and offer no help over time
- Charge a high fee
- Offer supplements or pills that are only available from the program
- Promise an easy path to quitting

### TELEPHONE-BASED HELP

Telephone counseling services are easy-to-use programs that can help you design a stop smoking program that works best for you. They can help you avoid making common mistakes.

Stop smoking telephone support can be a very helpful reinforcement, even as effective as face-to-face counseling.

Telephone programs are usually available nights and weekends. Trained counselors will help you decide whether you need medications, nicotine replacement therapy, and support programs or classes. They will help you set up a support network in your effort to quit cigarettes and tobacco.

A number of different telephone counseling smoking cessation programs are available or may be recommended by:

- Your local hospital or your physician
- Your health insurance plan
- Your employer
- The National Cancer Institute's 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669)
- The American Cancer Society's Quitline at 800-ACS-2345 (800-227-2345)
- The American Lung Association, which has online and phone advice programs
- All 50 states and the District of Columbia run some type of free telephone-based program

### SUPPORT GROUPS

Let all of your friends, family, and coworkers know of your plan to stop smoking and your quit date. Just being aware that they know what you're going through can be helpful - especially when you are grumpy.

However, you may want to seek out other types of support, such as:

- Your family doctor or nurse
- Groups of ex-smokers
- Nicotine Anonymous, an organization that uses a similar approach as Alcoholics Anonymous. As part of this group, you will be asked to admit that you are powerless over your addiction to nicotine. Also, a sponsor is often available over the long-term to talk when you have the temptation to smoke.

Check with your employer, health insurance plan, or health care provider about different types of support groups. Check the website of the American Cancer Society or American Lung Association for additional resources.

### STOP SMOKING PROGRAMS AND CLASSES

Stop smoking programs also help you design an approach that works best for you. They will help you be more aware of problems that come up while you're trying to quit, and then give you tools to cope with these problems. They can help you avoid making common mistakes as you try to quit smoking.

Programs may either have one-on-one sessions or group counseling, or sometimes a combination of the two. Programs should be run by counselors who are trained in smoking cessation.

Programs that provide more counseling sessions or longer sessions have a better chance of success. The American Cancer Society recommends programs with the following:

- Each session lasts at least 15 - 30 minutes
- There are at least four sessions
- The program lasts at least 2 weeks -- longer is usually better

## Physical Exercise and Mental Health Stress Relief

A variety of research studies over the past decade have focused on the effects of exercise on the mind. These studies focused on 40 minutes of walking as the preferred method of exercise. The results have been remarkably similar and show that exercise helps to reduce depression, reduce anxiety, improve short-term memory, and improve intellectual functions. This means that including exercise breaks in your day could lead to enhanced productivity, greater time efficiency and an increased ability to handle stress.

Researchers are not clear about why exercise has these positive effects, but most cite one or more of the "feel good hormones" as being responsible for the improvements. Apparently, exercise improves our body's transmitters, which help to stimulate dopamine, nor-epinephrine, endorphin, serotonin and adrenaline. These hormones give us the natural high that runners have reported for years.

**Following are some tips about starting and maintaining your own exercise program.**

- **Start with walking.** Walking is free and easy. In addition to the mental health benefits, walking is a weight-bearing exercise that strengthens bone and burns fat.
- **Do something accessible.** Make it easy on yourself by doing things that are manageable and within reach.
- **Jog.**
- **Look for a nearby fitness center or community pool.**
- **Make it fun.** Find an exercise activity that meets your needs and that you find enjoyable, otherwise you won't do it.
- **Keep your exercise clothes handy** – have them packed and in your car. Have extra sneakers in your car for impromptu walks.
- **Schedule exercise** in your day planner, laptop or Palm Pilot.
- **Just do something,** even if you only have ten minutes. Use the ten minute rule to get started: do ten minutes of exercise, take a ten-minute break, then do ten more minutes of exercise.
- **Set exercise goals for yourself.** Make sure they are realistic, measurable and most importantly, attainable. Achieving a goal can make you feel better about yourself and give you incentive to continue your efforts.
- **Get support.** Working with a personal trainer or a friend may provide the support you need to keep going.

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### Reaching Your Target Heart Rate

To gain the maximum benefit from aerobic exercise, it is important to increase your heart rate to the Target Heart Rate Zone and maintain that rate for at least 20 minutes. The Target Zone is based on your maximum heart rate (HR) or how many times your heart beats per minute. To derive a close approximation of your maximum HR, the formula is:  $(220) \text{ minus (your age) } = \text{HR}$ . The best aerobic activity level allows you to achieve 60 to 80% of this maximum rate. When you begin your exercise program, you should try to aim for the lower part of the heart rate Target Zone. As you get in better shape, gradually build up to the higher end of the Target Zone. Breathing should be deep, but you should not be "huffing and puffing."

### Sticking to It

Here are some suggestions to make exercising a part of your daily routine:

**Choose a partner.** Exercising with a friend helps keep exercise fun. You and your partner can motivate each other!

**Variation.** If you walk the same path over and over again, you may become bored. Change your route and add different types of exercises to your routine: try swimming, cycling, strength or weight training, light stepping, or light jogging.

**Specify goals.** If you have something to aim for, it makes the journey that much more fun.

**Keep an exercise journal.** It's fun to be able to look at your achievements. Keep track of the type of exercise you did, how long you did it for, and how hard you worked on it. Also try to note your mood before and after exercise, your sleeping patterns, and your energy level throughout the day. A journal will help you see a difference you can be proud of.

### REMEMBER:

**Consult your healthcare provider before starting any exercise or nutrition program.**

**Always stretch before and after exercise.** Stretching warms up muscles and prevents them from being pulled or torn. Stretching after exercise helps prevent soreness the next day.

**Monitor your body for unusual aches or pains.** Don't push yourself too hard or you may not want to continue.

**Exercise gives people an overall sense of good health.** Not only will you feel better physically, but regular exercise will give you a positive mental boost as well!

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## It's Never Too Late to Adopt Healthy Lifestyle Habits

The life expectancy of our nation's people has increased. Americans are living longer and in greater numbers, reflecting a demographic reality that will continue to surge in the 21st century as the baby boom generation ages. While it once seemed that health problems are inevitable in older age, there is conclusive evidence that many diseases can, in fact, be controlled or, even better, prevented. It is almost never too late to adopt healthy lifestyle habits, including a physical activity routine.

Positive changes in lifestyle have been shown to preserve function, delay or prevent the onset of disability, and improve the quality of life. The good news is that virtually all people -- including older people -- can reap health benefits if they:

- Improve their diet and nutrition
- Maintain an appropriate weight
- Stop smoking
- Stick with regular physical activity and exercise
- Get regular health checkups
- Keep physically and mentally active and socially engaged

Even persons with chronic conditions, such as arthritis or diabetes, can benefit from healthy lifestyle changes. Some of the most common effects of these conditions can be delayed, reduced, or controlled, resulting in better health, enhanced productivity, and an increased chance of wellness during aging.

Here are some tips to start or continue on the road to wellness:

### Beginning a Successful Exercise Program

The key to a successful exercise program is to choose activities that will be enjoyable.

**Aerobic exercise** strengthens the heart and overall fitness by increasing the body's ability to use oxygen. Walking, swimming, and dancing are low-impact aerobic exercises that you might consider. Running, hiking, calisthenics, and rope jumping are examples of high-impact aerobic exercises. These exercises are designed to improve the heart and lungs, and burn calories and fat. Begin with low-impact exercises if you are just starting out. Climbing stairs and doing housework or yard work are also aerobic exercises which can increase your strength and stamina.

**Walking** is a simple and effective exercise that many people enjoy. Those who are 65 and walk more than four hours a week are 30% less likely to be hospitalized for heart diseases than their sedentary counterparts. Always start slowly and gradually build to a brisk pace of walking to strengthen the heart and lungs, improve circulation, and provide more energy throughout the day. It is recommended that you exercise at least three times a week. Sustained, regular, moderate exercise is the key to greater fitness and health.

**Weight training.** Weight training is as essential to good physical health as aerobic exercise. There are indications that it will help in lowering cholesterol levels and strengthen muscles and bones. Weight training also increases the strength of ligaments and tendons which takes some stress off your joints.

Weight training can be done with equipment which works on specific parts of the body, or with free weights such as dumbbells and barbells. An experienced trainer can help identify realistic goals and establish the appropriate weight and number of repetitions for each set. Getting good advice to start is important in order to decrease the chance of injury and gain the maximum benefit from your workouts.



humor even in situations that are funny to most people. Stress can cause humor impairment. Fortunately, it is possible to change.

### Finding the Funny in Life

You don't have to laugh out loud to find something funny, but you do need to recognize the types of humor you will be able to use most effectively to manage stress. Do you like slapstick humor or verbal humor? Do you understand what kinds of humor offend you? Do you like jokes that focus on things you have in common with the comedian? Do you like humor built on current events? Do you like wordplay and puns? Do you like to see props and gimmicks? Do you find humor in things that weren't necessarily meant to be funny? Answering these questions will help you identify what humor to seek to help reduce stress and have more fun in life.

### Making a Humor Plan

You'll need a plan to deal with your daily stressors. First, make a list of all the things that happen regularly that almost always set off your stress response. Make your list as specific and detailed as possible. Things you might include are: people, habits, personality quirks, situations, things, and events. Write these things down so you have a good idea of the types of things you need to combat with humor. You'll also need to make a "happy" list - anything that makes you happy or makes you laugh. When you have to deal with one of your stressors, combat it with your tools for humor.

### Adding Humor to Your Life

You'll always have stress in your life. The key to using humor to deal effectively with your stress is to put more humor in your life. If you're surrounded by things that make you laugh, they can make the bad things easier to take. If you savor humor, it can be a lifesaver. Don't take life too seriously; it's only a temporary situation.

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### Tickle Your Stress Before it Tackles You

Regardless of who you are or what you do, chances are you spend a lot of time racing the clock, worrying about getting everything done and feeling out of control. Most people don't have a good handle on their stress. They focus on the unpleasant, and usually unexpected things that happen daily. That's not just stress, it's life.

There is a major difference between stressors - those things that happen every day that have the potential for driving us crazy, or making us angry, frustrated and hurt - and stress, the way we choose to respond to these stressors. You make a choice about how situations will affect the rest of your day. Why not make humor choices and practice them every day?

#### **Humor Makes Life Easier**

Humor can be a powerful and effective mechanism for coping with stress, especially when combined with other means of stress reduction. The real power of humor and laughter shows up when you learn to use it under stress. It keeps things in perspective, helps dispel negative emotions, and puts you in a frame of mind that can help you better cope with the situation. Combining stress management techniques with a humorous outlook on life won't make you stress-proof, but it can make the bad things easier to endure.

If you're willing to laugh at the little disasters in life, you'll find that other areas of your life will also become easier. Laughter, especially when you laugh at yourself, does many important things:

- It empowers you. When you laugh at your setbacks, you no longer feel sorry for yourself. You feel uplifted and encouraged.
- It helps you communicate more effectively.
- It makes you more likeable.
- It helps you cope. "Nothing erases unpleasant thoughts more effectively than concentration on pleasant ones." (Hans Selye, stress researcher)
- It provides perspective by removing you from your problems. Everyone makes mistakes, and we need to remember that, 'I may not be totally perfect, but parts of me are excellent.' (Ashleigh Brilliant)
- People tend to be less threatened by you.

#### **Using Humor Effectively**

You may agree that laughing will help with your stress but agreeing with this doesn't always help when the kids fight, miss the bus, and leave you late for work. To use humor effectively to cope with stress, you need to understand your own humor and how willing you are to laugh, have a humor plan, and practice using humor skills until they are comfortable.

Everyone has his or her own sense of humor. If you're not attuned to yours, you'll end up missing many opportunities to use humor skills to deal with life's little stressors. Being an adult is serious business, but so many people have lost the sheer capacity for fun, joy, and laughter. Even when the opportunity is there, we miss it. Many adults have this problem that can be called "humor impairment." Simply defined, it means the inability to find



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## Recognizing and Managing Stress

Stress is a physical or mental reaction to demanding situations. A certain amount of daily stress is normal and necessary. However, ongoing or excessive stress, either positive or negative, can result in fatigue, burnout and even depression. This flyer identifies some of the symptoms of stress and offers tips to help you manage the stress in your life.

### Symptoms of Stress

Learning to recognize the symptoms is the first step in effectively managing stress. Some signals that will alert you to excessive stress include:

- difficulty sleeping
- decreased satisfaction with tasks
- constant feeling of urgency
- tension headaches, backaches, stomachaches or other physical discomforts

### Managing Stress

A number of techniques can assist you in reducing stress. We recommend that you experiment with the following methods and use those that are most effective for you:

- **Take care of yourself.** Eating healthy foods and getting plenty of rest will help you maintain your body's resistance to the physical symptoms of stress.
- **Manage your time.** Take charge of your day by scheduling your time and focusing on your goals. Create a list of tasks to accomplish. Be sure to cross items off your list as they are completed.
- **Identify the messages you give yourself.** Focus on what you can do rather than your limitations. Be positive.
- **Try deep muscle relaxation.** Start by tensing your shoulders for about 10 seconds. Slowly release the tension and you will begin to feel your muscles relax. Try this exercise for all major muscle areas.
- **Make time for fun.** Take a break from your normal routine during the day to ease tension. Physical exercise or just a change of scenery, such as an evening at the movies, can help you relax.

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