



Staying quit (maintenance)

Remember the quote by Mark Twain, “Quitting is easy, I’ve done it a thousand times before”? Maybe you, too, have quit many times before. So you know that staying quit is the final, longest, and most important stage of the process. You can use the same methods to stay quit as you did to help you through withdrawal. Think ahead to those times when you may be tempted to smoke, and plan on how you will use other ways to cope with these situations.

More dangerous, perhaps, are the unexpected, strong desires to smoke that sometimes happen months, or even years after you’ve quit. To get through these without relapse, try the following:

- Review your reasons for quitting and think of all the benefits to your health, your finances, and your family.
- Remind yourself that there is no such thing as just one cigarette – or even one puff.
- Ride out the desire to smoke. It will go away, but do not fool yourself into thinking you can have just one.
- Avoid alcohol. Drinking lowers your chance of success.
- If you are worried about gaining weight, put some energy into eating a healthy diet and staying active with exercise.

Recovering from slips

What if you do end up smoking? The difference between a slip and a relapse is within your control. A slip is a one-time mistake that is quickly corrected, whereas a relapse is going back to smoking. You can use the slip as an excuse to go back to smoking, or you can look at what went wrong and renew your commitment to staying away from smoking for good.

Even if you do relapse, try not to get too discouraged. Very few people are able to quit for good on the first try. In fact, it takes most people many attempts before quitting for good. What's important is figuring out what helped you when you tried to quit and what worked against you. You can then use this information to make a stronger attempt at quitting the next time.

Mental rehearsal

Mental rehearsal is a great activity you can do when faced with a situation where you might be tempted to smoke. The idea behind mental rehearsal is for you to plan in advance what you will do. By planning ahead, you will not be caught off guard if you have a strong urge to smoke.

Evidence-based research indicates that this technique is a valuable coping mechanism to help with quitting. This is a tool you can use for any situation in the future, too.



Activity: Mental rehearsal for future tough situations

Imagine yourself in two different tough situations and how you will cope in each situation in the future so you are not tempted to smoke. Two examples are listed on the next page:



Activity: Mental rehearsal for future tough situations

Tough Situation	Actions	Thoughts	Mental Rehearsal
<p>Attending a party where people are smoking</p>	<p>Going with a non-smoking friend who supports my efforts to stay quit</p>	<p>"I'm a non-smoker now!"</p>	<p>Imagine you are going to a party where you know several people will be smoking around you. Close your eyes and imagine yourself at the party and being around a smoker. Then imagine yourself walking away from the smoker and telling yourself "I'm a non-smoker now!," and then going outside for some fresh air with a friend of yours who knows you've recently quit. Think about talking about the progress you've made so far and how proud you are of your hard work. Imagine your desire for that cigarette going away.</p>
<p>After leaving a job interview</p>	<p>Having a piece of hard candy, calling my friend</p>	<p>"If I can make it through seven days without smoking, I can make it through this, too!"</p>	<p>Imagine that you're leaving a job interview tomorrow, and you're having a strong craving to smoke. Now imagine that you're saying to yourself, "If I can make it through seven days without smoking, I can make it through this, too!" Right away you put a lemon drop in your mouth and call your friend. You're talking to your friend, and you get distracted from your craving. Before you know it, your craving has passed, and you feel really good about yourself for making it through.</p>

Some special concerns

Weight gain

Many smokers do gain weight when they quit. Women tend to gain slightly more weight than men. There is some evidence that smokers will gain weight after they quit even if they do not eat more. But even when steps aren't taken to try to prevent the weight gain, it's usually less than 10 pounds. For some, a concern about weight gain can lead to a decision not to quit. But the weight gain that follows quitting smoking is usually very small. It's much more dangerous to keep smoking than it is to gain a few pounds.

Stressing about your weight may make it harder to quit. You are more likely to quit smoking successfully if you deal with the smoking first, and then take steps to reduce your weight. While you are quitting, try to focus on ways to stay healthy, rather than on your weight. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, and limit fat. Be sure to drink plenty of water, and get enough sleep and regular physical activity.

Try walking

Walking is a great way to be physically active and increase your chances of staying quit. Walking can help you by:

- Reducing stress
- Burning calories and toning muscles
- Giving you something to do instead of thinking about smoking

No special equipment or clothing is needed for walking, other than a pair of comfortable shoes. And most people can do it pretty much anytime. You can use these ideas as starting points and come up with more of your own:

- Walk around a shopping mall.
- Get off the bus one stop before you usually do.
- Find a buddy to walk with during lunchtime at work.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Walk with a friend, family member, or neighbor after dinner.
- Push your baby in a stroller.
- Take a dog (yours or a neighbor's) out for a walk.

Set a clear goal. Try something like 30 minutes of walking each day just to get yourself started. If you don't already exercise regularly, check with your doctor first before starting an exercise program.

When smokers quit – what are the benefits over time?

20 minutes after quitting:

Your heart rate and blood pressure drop.

(Effect of Smoking on Arterial Stiffness and Pulse Pressure Amplification, Mahmud, A, Feely, J. 2003. *Hypertension*:41:183.)

12 hours after quitting:

The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.

(*US Surgeon General's Report*, 1988, p. 202)

2 weeks to 3 months after quitting:

Your circulation improves and your lung function increases.

(*US Surgeon General's Report*, 1990, pp.193, 194,196, 285, 323)

1 to 9 months after quitting:

Coughing and shortness of breath decrease; cilia (tiny hair-like structures that move mucus out of the lungs) start to regain normal function in the lungs, increasing the ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs, and reduce the risk of infection.

(*US Surgeon General's Report*, 1990, pp. 285-287, 304)

1 year after quitting:

The excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's.

(*US Surgeon General's Report*, 1990, p. vi)

5 years after quitting:

Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, and bladder are cut in half. Cervical cancer risk falls to that of a non-smoker. Stroke risk can fall to that of a non-smoker after 2-5 years.

(*A Report of the Surgeon General: How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease - The Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking-Attributable Disease Fact Sheet, 2010*; and *Tobacco Control: Reversal of Risk After Quitting Smoking. IARC Handbooks of Cancer Prevention, Vol. 11. 2007, p 341*)

10 years after quitting:

The lung cancer death rate is about half that of a continuing smoker's. The risk of cancer of the larynx (voice box) and pancreas decreases, too.

(*A Report of the Surgeon General: How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease - The Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking-Attributable Fact Sheet, 2010*; and *US Surgeon General's Report*, 1990, pp. vi, 155, 165)

15 years after quitting:

The risk of coronary heart disease is the same as a non-smoker's.

(*Tobacco Control: Reversal of Risk After Quitting Smoking. IARC Handbooks of Cancer Prevention, Vol 11. 2007. p 11*)

Taking care of yourself

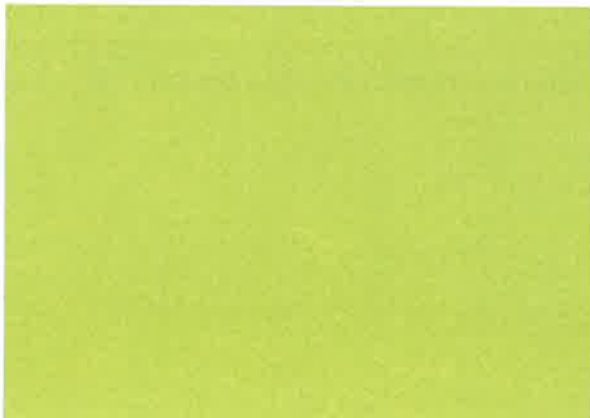
It's important for your health care provider to know of any present or past tobacco use so that you will get the preventive health care you need. It's well known that using tobacco puts you at risk for certain health-related illnesses, so part of your health care should focus on related screening and preventive measures to help you stay as healthy as possible. For example, you will want to be certain that you regularly check inside your mouth for any changes. Have your doctor or dentist look at your mouth, tongue, or throat if you have any changes or problems. The American Cancer Society recommends that medical checkups should include oral cavity (mouth) exams.

You should also be aware of any of the following changes:

- Change in a cough you already have
- A new cough or new kind of cough
- Coughing up blood
- Hoarseness
- Trouble breathing
- Wheezing
- Headaches
- Chest pain
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- General tiredness
- Frequent lung or bronchial infections

Any of these could be signs of lung cancer or a number of other lung conditions and should be reported to a doctor. While these can be signs of a problem, people with lung cancer often do not notice any symptoms until the cancer has spread to other parts of the body.

If you have any health concerns that may be related to your tobacco use, please see a health care provider as soon as possible. Taking care of yourself and getting treatment for small problems will give you the best chance for successful treatment. However, the best way to take care of yourself and to stay well is to quit using tobacco.



session 4: Stay Quit

More tips to help you stay smoke-free

Just like quitting, staying smoke-free can be hard work. These tips are designed to help you put your life as a smoker behind you forever and to help reward you for a job well done.

- Review this guide regularly.
- Ask your employer if they provide a telephone-based quit line program or call 1-866-QUIT-4-LIFE (1-866-784-8454) to find out if your employer, health plan, or state provides coaching services through the Quit For Life® Program brought to you by the American Cancer Society and Optum. If not, you will be transferred to your state-provided quitline.
- Carry your 3-by-5 index cards with you to remind you of the reasons why you quit smoking.
- Spend more time in places where you cannot smoke.
- Put the money you would have spent on cigarettes in a special “bank” each week. Write a short list of things you want for yourself or for a loved one and buy these items with your “bank” money.
- Get your teeth cleaned and whitened after you quit smoking so that you begin your “new life” with bright, white teeth.
- If you are a spiritual person, use your spirituality to help your quitting process.
- Find a friend who smokes and would like to quit. Offer that person the benefit of your experience and support when they are ready to quit.
- Share with others the sense of pride and well-being you feel now that you are not smoking.
- Find a new hobby, learn a sport, take up dancing, join a group, or get out the guitar that you played as a kid.
- Remove all cigarettes, ashtrays, and lighters from your home, apartment, workplace, car, clothes, etc. Clean your home, apartment, or car thoroughly to remove the cigarette smell.
- Make your quit date an anniversary date. Celebrate being a non-smoker!
- Encourage your workplace to adopt a tobacco-free policy if it hasn't already. Workplaces everywhere are going smoke-free to provide clean indoor air and protect employees from the harmful, life-threatening effects of secondhand smoke.

Because secondhand smoke is so harmful, smoking is being banned or restricted more and more in the workplace and in public places. There are many active grassroots efforts around the US working toward putting laws into effect to keep smoking out of all bars, restaurants, and bowling alleys within their communities. To learn how you can take action to help free the world from the pain and suffering of cancer, log on to the American Cancer Society Cancer Action NetworkSM (ACS CAN) website at acscan.org for more information. (ACS CAN is the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society.)





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