

Smoking

Preparing to Quit

Congratulations! You have made the decision to quit smoking. Quitting is hard. Here are some tips to help you stay on track.

Avoiding Triggers

Awareness of a behavior is the first step in controlling or changing that behavior. A “trigger” can be thought of as a cue or signal to engage in a certain behavior. Keep a record of triggers and high risk situations for smoking. Knowing your triggers may prevent situations before they happen or help you better prepare and deal with them.

Triggers fall into 1 of 2 groups:

- **External Triggers:** taste, smell, visual stimuli, after meals, with coffee or alcohol, when meeting people, working, talking on the phone, celebrating, having a well-earned break
- **Internal Triggers:** mood (anxiety, anger, happiness, and stress), certain thoughts

To monitor a smoking pattern, keep track of your cigarettes and triggers on a **tracking sheet**.

The table below lists common triggers for smoking, possible reasons why it is a trigger and coping strategies to stop the craving and urge to smoke when you encounter that trigger.

Trigger	Possible Reason	Alternative Coping Strategies
Morning/waking up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Withdrawal symptoms• Habit/something to start the day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brush your teeth right after you get up• Drink some orange juice• Exercise
After meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relaxing• Increases metabolism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep your hands busy (such as washing dishes)• Brush your teeth• Take a walk
Tension/stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coping mechanism (stress/bad mood)• Need a break	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exercise• Practice deep breathing• Take a warm bath
Driving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boredom• Coping with traffic stress• Habit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clean out ashtray• Use “no smoking” reminders• Chew gum/suck on peppermints• Remove lighter

Trigger	Possible Reason	Alternative Coping Strategies
Bedtime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habit • Relaxing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change nighttime routine • Drink warm milk to relax • Take a warm bath
Empty hands/idle time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boredom • Habit • Restlessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play with something in hands • Chew on toothpick • Work puzzles • Go for a walk • Doodle • Read • Call a friend
Coffee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habit • Relaxing • Taste/smell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid or switch to decaf or tea • Change environment (such as drink coffee outside or in a non-smoking place)
Phone calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restlessness • Habit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doodle • Play with something in your hands
Writing/studying/reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concentrating • Boredom • Habit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take breaks • Drink orange juice • Suck on peppermints
Watching TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restlessness • Habit • Boredom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chew on a straw • Eat popcorn or hard candy • Drink juice • Sit in a different chair • Listen to music or the radio instead
Being around other smokers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrating • Socializing/other smokers • Relaxing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask them not to smoke around you • Leave and go somewhere else (temporarily or permanently) • Be assertive about how you are feeling

Prepare Your Surroundings

To help you quit, remove things from your home, office or car that remind you of smoking.

- Get rid of visual reminders to smoke such as ashtrays, lighters or matches in your home, office and car.
- Find and destroy “stray” cigarettes. Clean out coat pockets, kitchen drawers and your glove compartment.
- Set up visual reminders to not smoke, such as short notes posted around your home, car and/or work (“Smoking is not an option”).

Clean and deodorize where you live:

- Deodorize and clean carpets
- Wash curtains
- Wash your clothes
- Deodorize your furniture (such as with Febreze®)
- Air out rooms by opening windows
- Light scented candles
- Clean out your car

Prepare Your Body

You may or may not have withdrawal symptoms. To handle any withdrawal symptoms you may have, it helps to get yourself physically prepared.

- Get a lot of rest. Your body is used to nicotine. It needs time to adjust to being without nicotine.
- Eat a balanced diet. Limit your fat intake and increase the amount of fruit and vegetables you eat each day.
- Think of this as a time for recovery.

Prepare Your Friends and Family

Quitting can be much easier if you have support from friends and family.

- Remind family and friends of your quit date.
- If possible, avoid people who are critical of your efforts to quit smoking.
- Remind your co-workers of your quit date and ask them to be patient if you become more irritable.

Resources

For more information on social support and help when quitting, ask your health care provider for a copy of the following:

- **Smoking: Support When Quitting**
- **Smoking: Strategies for Coping When Quitting**
- **Smoking: Tracking Sheet**