

Why Do You Use Tobacco?

Understanding Why You Use Tobacco Can Show You the Best Way to Quit

People use tobacco to fill many different needs. Studies show that most people smoke for one or more of the following reasons:

- Tobacco gives me more energy.
- I like to touch and handle cigarettes.
- I enjoy using tobacco.
- Tobacco helps me relax and handle stress.
- I crave nicotine. I am addicted to tobacco.
- Tobacco helps me from gaining weight.
- Tobacco use is a habit.

Answering the following questions may help you better understand the reasons that you use tobacco, which can lead you toward the steps to quit tobacco use for good.

'Tobacco Gives Me More Energy'

Do you use tobacco for this reason? If you answer "often" or "sometimes" to these questions, this is one reason you use:

Often **Sometimes** **Never**

1. I use to keep from slowing down.

2. I reach for a cigarette or dip when I need a lift.

3. When I am tired, tobacco perks me up.

Many people use tobacco like they use coffee: to help them wake up, get moving, keep going when they feel worn out. The nicotine in tobacco, like the caffeine in coffee, is a stimulant. But you can find other ways to get more energy. The following tips can help.

Tips to help you quit

- Get enough sleep. Plan your quit attempts around times when you know you will have opportunity to rest.
- Exercise. Even small amounts can raise your overall energy and give you a boost. For example, taking a brisk walk instead of smoking can help if you start feeling sluggish. Increasing your physical activity can help you manage weight gain and work through emotions that otherwise would make you want to use tobacco.
- Eat regular, healthful meals. Avoid foods high in calories and fats. Limit how much sugar you eat/drink. Sugar can increase cravings to use tobacco.
- Drink lots of ice water. It will refresh you as it helps clear your body of nicotine and helps with cravings.
- Keep your mind active, perhaps by calling a friend, reading a new magazine or playing a game.

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'I Like to Touch and Handle Cigarettes'

Do you smoke for this reason? If you answer "often" or "sometimes" to these questions, this is one reason you use:

- | | Often | Sometimes | Never |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I feel more comfortable with a cigarette in my hand. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I enjoy taking a cigarette out of the pack and lighting up. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I like to watch the smoke when I exhale. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I like the feeling of smoke going down my throat. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

This type of smoker gets physical pleasure from handling cigarettes and the rituals of smoking. It "feels right" to have a cigarette in his or her hand or mouth. In fact, many ex-smokers say they have gone back to smoking because, "I needed to keep my hands busy."

People who have smoked 1 pack a day for 10 years have done the hand-to-mouth action about 1.8 million times. Retraining this motion will be helpful in getting over this obstacle.

Tips to help you quit

- Pick up a pen or pencil when you want to reach for a cigarette. Doodle or make a list of your reasons for quitting. Write a goodbye letter to your cigarettes.
- Play with a coin, twist your ring or handle whatever harmless object is nearby.
- Play with a plastic straw, cinnamon stick or toothpick.
- Eat regular meals to avoid being hungry. Do not confuse needing to eat with the desire to put a cigarette in your mouth.

- Have a low-fat, low-sugar snack like carrot sticks or apple slices. Suck on a sugar-free hard candy or mint, or chew gum.
- Shuffle cards or play with rubber bands.
- Take up a hobby that keeps your hands busy such as knitting, carpentry, crafts or putting together puzzles.
- Consider using the nicotine gum, nicotine lozenge or Nicotrol® inhaler. Talk about options with your doctor.

'I Enjoy Using Tobacco'

Do you use tobacco for this reason? If you answer "often" or "sometimes" to these questions, this is one reason you use:

- | | Often | Sometimes | Never |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Using tobacco is pleasant and enjoyable. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Tobacco makes good times better. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I want tobacco most when I am comfortable and relaxed. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Almost 2 out of 3 smokers say they just plain enjoy smoking. When you associate tobacco with "the good times," it can strengthen your habit. It can be easier to quit when you focus on enjoying yourself without tobacco. The following tips offer some ideas to help you miss it less.

Tips to help you quit

- Enjoy the pleasures of being tobacco-free. Focus on how:
 - good foods now taste
 - fresh you look and feel in social situations without using tobacco
 - much easier it is to walk, run and climb stairs now that your lungs are smoke-free
 - good it feels to be in control of the urge to use.

■ Give yourself short- and long-term rewards.

—Short-term: a bubble bath, a special treat or going to a movie.

—Long-term: by spending the money you save on tobacco on another kind of pleasure such as buying a special item or a night out, or a vacation.

■ Remind yourself of the health benefits you get by quitting. Choosing to be tobacco-free can help you enjoy life’s other pleasures for many years to come.

‘Tobacco Helps Me Relax or Handle Stress’

Do you use tobacco for this reason? If you answer “often” or “sometimes” to these questions, this is one reason you use:

Often Sometimes Never

1. I light up a cigarette or grab chew when something makes me angry.

2. Tobacco relaxes me in stressful situations.

3. When I am depressed I reach for tobacco to feel better.

4. Tobacco helps me unwind.

Many people use tobacco to help them through bad times. Using tobacco causes chemical imbalances that mask the feelings of anxiety for a short while but makes your body respond as if you are under great stress. Once those pleasant feelings wear off, you feel anxious again. The cycle starts again.

‘I Crave Nicotine. I Am Addicted to Tobacco.’

Do you use tobacco for this reason? If you answer “often” or “sometimes” to these questions, this is one reason you use:

Often Sometimes Never

1. When I run out of tobacco, it’s almost unbearable until I get more.

2. I feel unsettled when I am not using tobacco.

3. When I have not used for a while, I get a strong urge for tobacco.

People are addicted to the nicotine in tobacco. When people quit, many go through a withdrawal period. They may have both physical symptoms (feeling tired and irritable, having headaches or feeling nervous) and an emotional need for tobacco.

Many people compare quitting tobacco to losing their best friend. It can help to compare your relationship to tobacco to the elements of an abusive relationship: being controlled, being told you cannot handle life without them, and feeling trapped with living with something that harms you even though you know it is not good for you.

It is not easy to get over an addiction to tobacco, but many people have succeeded. It takes a lot of practice for most people to fully quit. Look at cravings as opportunities to find new ways to live without tobacco.

Tips to help you quit

- Ask your doctor about using medicines to help you manage withdrawal symptoms.
- Each experiment will teach you something about what is helpful and what is not. Every time you practice, you are learning about what is useful for the next time.
- Get support from others.
 - Talk with your family, friends or coworkers about how to support you while you quit. Be specific.
 - See if others would like to quit with you. This way you can support each other through the tougher times of quitting. If one person slips, that does not give the other person “permission” to use again.
- Even the most intense cravings can only last up to 15 minutes. Most cravings last for 3 to 5 minutes, and often it is only a challenging 30 seconds. Time your cravings to get a sense of how long they actually last. Wait it out and tell yourself “this too shall pass.”

‘Tobacco Helps Keep Me From Gaining Weight’

Do you use tobacco for this reason? If you answer “often” or “sometimes” to these questions, this is one reason you use:

Often Sometimes Never

1. I choose smoking instead of snacking.

2. I am less hungry when I use tobacco.

3. I gained weight when I quit smoking in the past.

It’s common to gain a small amount of weight after quitting tobacco. The average weight gain is 5 to 10 pounds.

You would have to gain 75 to 90 pounds to equal the amount of stress on the heart that tobacco causes. Adding a few pounds is still healthier than using tobacco.

It is not easy to get over an addiction to tobacco, but many people have done it. It takes a lot of practice for most people to fully quit. Look at cravings as ways to find new ways to live without tobacco.

Tips to help you quit

- Eat regular meals to avoid being hungry.
- Do not confuse needing to eat with a desire to put a cigarette in your mouth.
- Have a snack low in fat and sugar such as carrot sticks or apple slices.
- Suck on sugar-free hard candy or chew gum. (Sugar can make you want to use tobacco.)
- Get more physical activity to help you manage your weight.

‘Tobacco Use is a Habit’

Do you use tobacco for this reason? If you answer “often” or “sometimes” to these questions, this is one reason you use:

Often Sometimes Never

1. I smoke cigarettes or chew automatically without being aware of it.

2. I light up a cigarette without realizing I have one burning in an ashtray.

3. I find a cigarette or chew in my mouth and don’t remember putting it there.

If you are this kind of tobacco user, you may be no longer getting much satisfaction from using tobacco. Unlike people who use for pleasure, you might not miss it much if you stopped. The key is breaking your patterns. The tips below can help.

Tips to help you quit

- Change your environment and routines.
For example, keep your tobacco in a different place. Smoke with your opposite hand. Do not do anything else while smoking. Limit tobacco use to certain places, such as outside or in one room at home. Do things in a different order.
- When you want tobacco, try waiting.
Be aware of every cigarette you smoke. Ask yourself: Do I really need this or do I just want this cigarette? You may be surprised at how many you can easily pass up.
- Set a date for giving up tobacco altogether and stick to it.

- Change your environment to help reduce cravings.
 - Keep away from tobacco completely and get rid of ashtrays.
 - Destroy any cigarettes you have.
 - Try to avoid people who smoke and smoke-filled places if you're having withdrawal symptoms or cigarette cravings.
 - Make your home and vehicles smoke-free.
- Think positively.
 - Believe you can.
 - Remind yourself you don't do this anymore.
 - Tell yourself often: "I can do this!"