

Behavioral Tips and Coping Skills for Quitting Tobacco

Getting Started

- Make a list of reasons for quitting.
- Think positively.
 - Believe you can.
 - Remind yourself, “I’m choosing not to smoke today.”
 - Remember that it’s “not that I can’t smoke, it’s that I’m choosing not to.”
 - Tell yourself often: “I can do this.”
 - Visualize yourself as someone who doesn’t use tobacco.
- Use relaxation breathing.
 - Inhale to count of eight.
 - Hold to count of four.
 - Exhale to count of eight.
- Substitute items for cigarettes.
 - Chew gum.
 - Suck on hard candy.
 - Chew on straws or toothpicks.
 - Eat low-calorie snacks.
- Keep your hands busy.
 - Play cards.
 - Read books.
 - Put together puzzles.
 - Play with rubber binders.
 - Make crafts.
 - Write letters.
 - Draw.
 - Paint.
- Concentrate on the good things in your life!
- Change your environment:
 - Change your routine to help avoid temptation. Even small changes can lower the craving to smoke.
 - Get rid of all cigarettes, ashtrays and lighters in your home, car, desk or office.
 - Change your favorite smoking areas to make them remind you less of smoking.
 - Make your home and vehicles smoke free.
- Get support from others:
 - Talk to your family, friends or coworkers about how to support you while you quit.
 - See if others you know would like to quit with you. This way you can support each other through the tougher times of quitting.
- Plan your reward for each day you do not smoke. Think about small, pleasurable activities you can do during your day that give you joy. Long-term rewards are helpful as well, but the small rewards are just as important.
- Remember that even the most intense craving lasts only 5 to 10 minutes. Wait it out. Tell yourself, “This too shall pass.”

(over)

Avoiding a Relapse

- Think about what you are gaining from quitting tobacco, instead of focusing on what you've given up. For example, "It's easier to play with my kids or grandkids."
- Have a plan for how you will deal with unexpected urges. (Take a walk, make a call.)
- Think your way through difficult situations ahead of time whenever you can.
- Think about past quitting attempts and what was helpful to you. Reuse them again if possible or try something new.
- Explore ways to move your body with safe and realistic expectations. Increasing your physical activity can help you manage weight gain and work through emotions that otherwise would make you want to smoke.
- Avoid foods high in calories and fat. Sugar can increase cravings to smoke. Limit large amounts of sugar.
- Drink lots of water. Ice water may be helpful in getting rid of a craving.
- Reward yourself when you reach milestones: 1 day, 1 week, 2 weeks, 1 month, etc.
- Go to places where you cannot smoke — stay away from the places you used to smoke.
- Think about the money you saved!
- Think of quitting as an act of love — for those you care about and for yourself!