

Quit Tobacco Now: Here is how to S.T.A.R.T.

Set a Quit Date

Pick a date, within the next two weeks, to quit smoking. This will give you enough time to get ready. Don't set yourself up for failure—avoid setting a quit date you know will be hard to quit (like a huge party, a final exam, or a stressful holiday).

Tell Family and Friends about your decision to quit

Share - Tell your friends and family that you've decided to quit smoking.

Connect - Talk with people who understand; try the SFT Network (teen.smokefree.gov). Quitting is easier with the support of people in your life. But, they can't help you if you don't tell them what's going AND what you need from them. We all need different things, so speak up! Not sure how? Here are some suggestions about how to get the conversation STARTed:

- Tell your family and friends that you are quitting because...
- Ask friends and family to check in with you to see how things are going
- Ask your friends and family not to smoke around you
- Identify your triggers, and ask your friends and family to help you avoid them
- Ask your friends and family to help you think of smokefree activities that you can do together (like going to the movies or the gym)
- Ask your friends and family not to let you bum a cigarette—no matter what
- Ask others who are trying to quit for tips and advice to help you stay smokefree
- Let your friends and family know that you may be grouchy while you're quitting; ask them to put up with you and help you through it
- Ask a friend or family member to quit with you

Ask your friends and family to help you celebrate your smokefree milestones: 24 hours, 3 days, 1 week, etc.

Anticipate and plan for times when you may be tempted

Quitting is hard! During the first few weeks you may:

- Feel a little depressed
- Not be able to sleep
- Get cranky, frustrated, or
- Feel anxious, nervous, or restless
- Have trouble thinking clearly

These feelings are normal and—more importantly—they are only temporary. Most people who start smoking again do it to stop these uncomfortable feelings quickly. That doesn't have to be you! Anticipating and planning ahead will make it easier for you to stay smokefree. **START** with this:

- **Know your triggers** – Certain people, places, things, or situations can make you want to smoke. Avoid the temptation by avoiding them
- **Prepare for cravings** – Cravings only last a few minutes, so come up with a list of things you could do instead of smoking when a craving hits; try quick and easy 10-minute distractions
- **Plan for withdrawal** – Withdrawal is your body adjusting to not having nicotine; not everyone has symptoms of withdrawal, but if you do, it helps to know what's happening

Remind yourself why you want to be smokefree

Reminding yourself of your smokefree goals will help keep you on track when a craving strikes. **START** by making a list of all the reasons you want to quit and write them down. Use the list below to help you get started:

- Because I want to be more date-able.
- Because I want to set a good example for my younger siblings.
- Because I want to have more money to spend.
- Because I don't want to be duped by Big Tobacco.
- Because I want to protect the environment.
- Because I want to be healthier now and in the future.
- Because I want to make my friends and family proud of me.
- Because I want to have more energy.
- Because I want to feel in control of my life.
- Because I want my brain and lungs to develop right.
- Because I will be able to _____.
- Because I will feel more _____.
- Because I will have more _____.
- Because I won't have to _____.

Keep your list somewhere you'll see it (like your phone, car, or locker). This might sound lame, but keeping a reminder close by when you're triggered to smoke will remind you why you want to stay quit.

Oh, btw! Don't forget to get rid of the things that remind you of smoking now that you're on your way to being smokefree! **START** by trashing your pack of cigarettes and lighters.

Track and monitor your progress regularly

Tracking and monitoring your progress can help you stay accountable and figure out the best strategies to help you quit. Print out and use the Daily Tracker below to monitor your cravings, mood, and overall progress. Experiment with personalizing your chart—track the things that matter most to you!

QuitSTART Daily Tracker

Today's Date							
My Quit Date Was:							
Total # of Days Smokefree:							
My Triggers Today							
Seeing someone else smoke				Drinking coffee			
Feeling bored				Finishing a meal			
Cooling off after a fight				Hanging out before or after school			
Feeling lonely				Taking a work or study break			
Listening to music				Being with other smokers			
My Moods Today (circle all that apply to you)							
Angry							
Happy							
Sad							
Blah							
Relaxed							
Nervous							
Stressed							
OK							
My Journal							
My Cravings Today:							
1 = min / 8 = max							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Number of Cravings							
1 = min / 8 = max							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Withdrawal, Cravings, Slips, and Sticking With It:

Withdrawal

Nicotine is the main addictive substance in cigarettes. It is a drug and affects many parts of your body, including your brain. Over time, your body and brain get used to the nicotine. You don't have to be a daily smoker to be addicted to nicotine. Studies show that your body can get hooked on nicotine even if you only smoke a couple of cigarettes per week.

When you stop smoking, your body has to adjust to not having nicotine in its system. This is called withdrawal. For most people, withdrawal symptoms only last a few days to a few weeks. But cravings for cigarettes can last longer. Not everyone has symptoms of withdrawal, but it helps to be prepared.

Withdrawal is different for everyone. Here is a list of the most common symptoms. These symptoms—including cravings—will fade every day that you stay smokefree.

- Cravings for cigarettes
- Feeling down or sad
- Having trouble sleeping
- Feeling irritable, on edge, grouchy
- Having trouble thinking clearly and concentrating
- Slower heart rate
- Headache
- Feeling more hungry or gaining weight

Cravings

The urge to smoke will come and go. Plan how to handle cravings before they hit. The best plan is to AVOID the people, places, and things that trigger the urge to smoke. But for the times that you can't avoid triggers, there are things that you can do to make the craving pass more quickly. You can always try to wait it out, but have some other strategies ready. For example:

1. **Play telephone.** Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or 1-877-44U-QUIT to talk to an expert about quitting smoking. It's free and can help you get all your questions answered and tips to help you quit. You don't have to do this alone.
2. **The Waiting Game.** Wait 15 minutes. Cravings only last a few minutes, so wait it out by reading a magazine, listening to your favorite song, or beating your highest score on your favorite game.
3. **Run up the stairs.** Spend a few minutes running up and down the stairs. Gasping for breath afterwards will be a good reminder of why you want to be smokefree.
4. **Starve the craving.** Just one puff will feed the cravings and make them stronger. Remind yourself why you want to be smokefree. Review your reasons for wanting to be smokefree while you wait for your craving to pass.
5. **Go to a smokefree zone.** Go hang out somewhere you're not allowed to smoke. Go to a movie, a store, or any other smokefree public place. Easier and easier to find these days so use these places to help you be smokefree.
6. **Think of the money you're saving.** It's no secret that cigarettes are expensive and they're not getting any cheaper. Distract yourself during your craving by adding up all the money you're saving and think about the awesome stuff you'll be able to buy with it!
7. **Bum a stick of gum.** Instead of bumming a cigarette, ask for a stick of gum. You can still strike up a conversation, keep your mouth busy, and stay smokefree.
8. **Mix it up!** Stop whatever you're doing and do something else. Certain people, places, things, or situations can make you want to light up. Avoid the temptation to smoke by doing something else for a few minutes.

9. **Call for reinforcements.** Touch base with a friend or family member while you resist the craving. Chat on the phone, share a few laughs, or share the struggles. You don't have to do this alone.
10. **Fight the urge.** Bust out some kickboxing moves and imagine your craving as your opponent. Punch, kick, or jab until you beat your craving (search YouTube for kickboxing moves if you need ideas)!
11. **Beat your best score.** Cravings only last a few minutes, so get through it by trying to beat your highest score on your favorite game. If you've already done that, download a new game and try to beat the highest score.
12. **Tie your hands up.** No, not literally! Find an activity that requires both of your hands. Paint your fingernails or pop in your favorite PS3 game.
13. **Tell yourself N.O.P.E (Not One Puff Ever!).** Say it loud, say it proud! Taking one puff leads to another, and another, and another....you get the picture. So when a craving hits, just say N.O.P.E!
14. **BREATHE!** It sounds lame, but your brain requires the right amounts of oxygen and carbon dioxide to think clearly. Breathe through your craving by inhaling (through your nose) and exhaling (through your mouth), then repeat 10 times. Now that you're thinking clearly, do you really want that cigarette?
15. **Give yourself a pep talk-** Psych yourself up by telling yourself how awesome you are and that you can get through your craving. If that's not your style, have a pep rally instead. Play a song that gets you all hyped up and empowers you to beat your craving.

Every time you resist the urge to smoke, your cravings get a little weaker. Plan ahead and stick to your smokefree plan! Try using a tracking chart below to monitor your cravings, mood, and overall progress. Experiment with personalizing your chart—track the things that matter most to you!

Slips

Don't be discouraged if you slip up and smoke one or two cigarettes. It's not a lost cause. One cigarette is better than an entire pack. That doesn't mean you can safely smoke every now and then, no matter how long ago you quit. One cigarette can quickly lead you back to your old ways. If you have a slip, here are some things you can do:

- **Don't be too hard on yourself.** One slip up doesn't make you a failure.
- **Don't be too easy on yourself.** Don't say, "Well, I've blown it. I might as well smoke the rest of this pack." It's important to get back on the non-smoking track *right away*.
- **Remember, your goal is no cigarettes**—not even one puff.
- **Feel good about all the time you went without smoking.** Focus on how far you've come instead of focusing on this small setback.
- **Find the trigger.** Exactly what was it that made you smoke? Be aware of that trigger and decide how you will cope with it next time.
- **Learn from your mistake.** What has helped you the most to keep from smoking? Make sure to do that on your next try.
- **Are you getting enough support?** Don't be afraid to ask for help. Quitting is easier if you have support from people who understand what you're going through.
- **Get free, professional coaching to help you succeed!** Sign up for SmokefreeTXT (teen.smokefree.gov or text the word QUIT to IQUIT 47848), IM with a quit coach, or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW to get tips from a live person.

Sticking With It

You have the tools to stay smokefree—it's up to you now. Still need some tips to stay quit? Make sure you:

- **Stay alert**—Your brain learned to crave nicotine when you were smoking, so certain people, places, things, and situations can trigger an urge to smoke, even after years of quitting. Track your triggers and cravings to master your patterns.
- **Fight back**—Sometimes you'll have to face your cravings head on, so remember at least one or two tips you've learned as your go-to move to get you through.
- **Stay positive**—If you slip, don't freak out and think of quitting smoking as "all or none." Take it one day at a time. It's a journey, not a destination.
- **Reward yourself**—Calculate the money you're saving by not buying cigarettes. Now put it to good use and reward yourself when you reach important milestones.

The above is adapted from teen.smokefree.com – This website contains excellent information about quitting smoking. You can speak with a quit smoking counselor at 1-800-QUIT-NOW.